

**A comparative analysis report on Early Years and Childminding regulation and inspection requirements across the UK, based on Northern Ireland minimum standards (2016)**

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## **Section 1: Introduction**

The aim of this project was to undertake a comparative analysis across the UK of the legislation, regulation, guidance and standards used for the registration, regulation and inspection of 'early years' day care and 'childminding' services. Following a meeting with the Health and Social Care Board in October 2017, the focus and aim of the project was agreed, and a number of key personnel and sources of information were identified that could inform the process, within the agreed timeframe. Due to the project's time constraints it was agreed that only a selection of key stakeholders could be contacted during November 2017. A decision was made by the author not to identify individual stakeholders who provided feedback information, as it was made clear to them that this was not a research or an audit project, but more a 'snapshot' of the current issues in relation to early years and registration, regulation and inspection. Only some key themes from this feedback are included in the report as some comments require additional analysis and interrogation.

## **Section 2: Sources that informed this project:**

Desktop research was conducted to search, collate and review all relevant legislation, policy, regulation, standards and inspection guidance used in Wales, England, Scotland and Northern Ireland (see appendix 1). This was quite a lengthy process as many of these UK's regulations, standards and requirements have been regularly reviewed and updated over the past 20 years, and it was not always apparent if the previous regulations etc had been completely rescinded or subsumed into the new versions of national standards and minimum requirements. However, every attempt was made to ensure that the most recent regulatory and inspection requirements for each country were included for a comparative analysis (see later comment on structures and definitions)

In addition, contact was made directly or indirectly, with approximately 20 early years organisations, including daycare and childminding representative umbrella groups, and staff in two Health and Social Care Trusts Early Years teams. A feedback template was developed and this was emailed to a range of providers of early years services in Northern Ireland. Emailed feedback returns were made up until 17<sup>th</sup> November 2017 and given the time constraints a brief thematic analysis was conducted on the information provided, and on the interviews conducted. The focus of the project was not primarily focused on the inspection process, but some feedback on this process in Northern Ireland was provided, and is included in appendix 2. It was difficult to determine the exact number of responses, as some returns were the collective views of an Early Years provider umbrella organisation but it was a limited response.

### **Section 3: UK comparison of ‘early years’ and ‘childminding’ services terminology: (are we comparing like with like)**

To begin with the term ‘early years day care’ has many facets, and in Northern Ireland alone it embraces a wide range of different services; nurseries, playgroups, crèches, pre and after school facilities and a range of sessional, including holiday-type schemes. The provision itself can also be either full-time or part-time, and other factors such as the duration of the care, or the age groups of the children attending, produce additional subsets with different requirements and regulations. In attempting to compare the requirements in all four countries, across the various care settings / per hours care etc, the process got very complex and it proved impossible to include all the various permutations in this report. Therefore, the concentration was on what Northern Ireland terms ‘full time day care’ (4 hours plus) and part-time / sessional (less than 4 hours), with 30 minutes turnover time, plus what is defined as ‘childminding’.

The problem was further compounded by the different UK governmental departments and structures involved in regulation and the different inspection processes employed. In England, Wales and Scotland many of the ‘early years’ regulations and standards cover a much wider remit than in Northern Ireland, such as the inspection of formal, statutory early years educational provision, and other community based family support services. In Northern Ireland these statutory functions are shared across a number of departments, therefore a direct comparison of government structures did not seem to be a very fruitful exercise. These structural anomalies will be mentioned further in the country-specific sections but they do mean that inevitably we are not always comparing ‘like with like’, when you do a UK comparative analysis.

For the purpose of this project the generic term ‘early years day care’ will be used, unless a provision-specific regulation or standard is referred to. The term ‘childminder’ is more easily defined and understood throughout the UK, and it usually refers to those who are registered who provide childcare for children in their own home.

#### **Defining ‘early years’ by age throughout the UK:**

The legal (and regulatory) concept of an age for ‘early years’ and related services for children in this category also has different definitions in each country. Since 1995, Northern Ireland has determined that ‘early years’ services regulation applies to all children **under the age of 12**, Children (NI) Order 1995, article 120, (2). In Scotland ‘early years’ is defined in the Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001, and this regulates the provision of early years education (including day care) and childminding for children and young people **up to the age of 16 years** (but under 6’s

have special requirements). In England, since 1989, early years regulation and inspection has been for children **under the age of 8 years**, Day Care and Childminding, National Standards, (England) Regulations 2003, No.1996, (Part XA of the Children Act, 1989). This was subsequently updated by the Childcare Act (2006). Finally, in Wales a recent policy called 'National Minimum Standards for Regulated Childcare for children **up to the age of 12 years**' (CSSIW, 2016), is based on Child Minding and Day Care (Wales) Regulations 2010.

The regulations and development of standards in early years daycare and childminding has undergone regular reviews in all four countries and changes have often been assimilated into other changes in generic care standards, early years policy and legislation in their respective countries. In addition, the early years inspection processes in the UK countries have undergone various changes over the years. This has obviously made direct comparisons difficult and complex, but feedback on the inspection process in Northern Ireland was provided through the feedback exercise, and is commented upon in section 8.

#### **Section 4: The Northern Ireland (NI) context:**

The current standards, 'Standards for Regulation and Inspection: Daycare and Childminding' (HSCB, 2016) as used in Northern Ireland, provided a framework to compare standards and regulatory requirements across the other UK countries. Please note that different terminology is used to describe similar standards in different countries, and direct equivalencies do not always exist due to the different legal, procedural and regulatory systems employed in each country.

In Northern Ireland the current **16 minimal standards** (DHSSPS, 2012) are contained in the *Implementation Guidance Sessional and Full Day Care, Childminding and Day Care for Children Under Age 12, Minimum Standards, (version 3), 2016, HSCB*. The implementation guidance and the minimal standards are inextricably linked in terms of the regulation and inspection of both childminding and day care services, see section 6.

The Northern Ireland minimal standards (DHSSPS, 2012) and implementation guidance (HSCB, 2016) below, have 5 sections and 16 'minimum' standards: (Please note many of these cross-reference with other regulations such as, The Children (NI) Order 1995, Guidance and Regulations, Volume 2), Health and Safety legislation and Safeguarding policies and procedures.

#### Standards:

##### *Section 1 Quality of Care*

Standard 1 Safeguarding and Child Protection

Standard 2 Care, Development and Play

Standard 3 Children's Health & Wellbeing

Standard 4 Health & Safety in the Setting  
Standard 5 Food and Drink  
Standard 6 Promoting Positive Behaviour  
Standard 7 Working in Partnership with Parents  
Standard 8 Equality  
Standard 9 Additional Needs

*Section 2 Quality of Staffing, Management & Leadership*

Standard 10 Management and Monitoring Arrangements  
Standard 11 Organisation of the Setting, Category 1 and 2 Assistants  
Standard 12 Suitable Person

*Section 3 Quality of Physical Environment*

Standard 13 Equipment  
Standard 14 Physical Environment

*Section 4 Quality of Monitoring & Evaluation*

Standard 15 Documentation  
Standard 16 Complaints

*Section 5 Policies & Procedures*

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**Section 5: Setting the context for regulation in England, Scotland and Wales:**

In the other UK countries early years day care and childminding standards are contained in more generic regulatory requirements, that usually cover a much wider range of services, such as 'early education'. In England, Wales and Scotland they link in with a range of other government guidance and regulations when inspecting daycare or childminding, unless exempt, (see reference section 7).

**England has 14 standards**

The registration process is complex as it overlaps with early years education provision and has different criteria for different types of provision. The daycare sector must also meet the statutory requirements for the Early Years Foundation Stage, (Dept of Education, 2017). England has an 'early years register' and a 'Child care Register' and early years is regulated and inspected by 'The Office for Education, Children's Service and Skills' (Ofsted).

Each of the 14 standards describes a particular quality outcome, and is accompanied by a set of supporting criteria giving information about how that outcome is to be achieved. Regulations under the Childcare Act (2006) and Children

Act (1989) require providers (technically the registered person in each setting) to meet the 14 standards and to have 'regard' to the supporting criteria. The law also requires Ofsted inspectors to have regard to both the standards and criteria. The national standards do not override the need for providers to comply with other legislation such as that covering health and safety, food hygiene, fire or planning requirements. Self- evaluation is encouraged and there is a big emphasis on learning and development. The publication of inspection reports is promoted and the focus since 2017 is on the 'Early Years Foundation Stage' requirements.

### **Wales has 24 standards:**

Wales has recently introduced their new 'National Minimum Standards for Regulated Childcare for children up to the age of 12 years' (CSSIW, 2016). These replace the National Minimum Standards for Regulated Child Care issued in April 2011. These standards are used to determine whether childminding and daycare settings are providing adequate care for children up to the age of twelve. They have to be read in the context of Part 2 (Child Minding and Day Care for Children) of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010, as amended by the Child Minding and Day Care (Wales) Order 2016; and associated regulations. The regulatory body responsible for ensuring that these standards are met is the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW). The 24 standards used in Wales are very detailed and the process seems the closest to the Northern Ireland system.

### **Scotland has 14 standards**

The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, (part 6 and part 8) places the responsibility for 'early years and child care' on the local Scottish Education Authority. Education and care regulations are combined in the one inspection process. Their standards are written in a very user-friendly manner, to encourage self assessment by providers, inclusion of parents and children, scores from 1-6 are used and publication is promoted.

Scotland also registers the early years workforce with their SSS Council and recently made a decision to register childminders under the same conditions as other early years staff. Scotland has a national assessment framework that included a 'Curriculum for Excellence', for 'early learning and care', for children aged 0-6. There is a big emphasis on early education and qualified teachers play a key role in the delivery and management of pre-school early years provision.

## **Section 6: Comparative Analysis**

In compiling this comparative analysis table (1) more emphasis is placed on some Northern Ireland standards more than others, usually based on feedback from providers that they may be the more complex areas for regulation and inspection.

Please note that the structure and names of Northern Ireland’s standards are not the same as those used in the other three countries, so the table has to cross-reference with the closest equivalency in England, Wales and Scotland.

\* Please see reference list (appendix 1) for the specific UK legislation, standards and guidance as each country calls similar requirements / standards different names

**Table 1: Comparative Analysis:**

**Key:** *DC* (Daycare) *CM*, Child minding), *IG* (implementation guidance) *NS* (national standards), *NMS* (national minimum standards), *NCS* National Care Standard, *MS* (minimal standard), , *Reg* (Regulation), *IS* (Inspection standard)

NI Standard 1 Safeguarding and Child Protection	Requirement / Guidance / Standard/ Legislation	Comment
Northern Ireland  <b>Staffing issues</b> – these also mentioned under the staff / children ratios section, see standard 11 (MS) for specific provision	In any group based setting it is necessary for any room to be under the supervision of <b>at least two members of staff at all times in keeping with the required ratio</b> (IG section I, pg 6)  * Some professional discretion is mentioned for sleeping children or annexed rooms.	In NI the staff to child ratios are included under this standard so the emphasis may be deemed more of a child protection requirement, whereas in other countries ratios are linked to more generic quality of care standards, sometimes in an annex
----- Safeguarding	<i>The provision of appropriate policies and procedures, known and understood by all staff/parents</i> • <i>The regular review of policies and procedures</i> • <i>Access to approved training for all staff on Safeguarding issues on a regular (three-yearly) basis. Childminders will be required to undertake initial Safeguarding training as developed by Trusts before their Registration is approved.</i> • <i>The availability of a clear whistle blowing policy known to all staff-</i>	NI provides detailed guidance (IG) linking safeguarding to policies and procedures and training



	<p>their first week of employment. NMS 13.9(DC))  All paid staff receive regular one-to-one supervision which encourages them to think about the quality of their practice and raise any safeguarding concerns. They also receive formal appraisal at least once a year NMS 13.11(DC)</p>	<p>refers inspectors to Working together to Safeguard Children (2015)</p>
<p>England Staffing</p> <p>safeguarding guidance</p>	<p>There is a minimum of two adults on duty. NS (2.9)  The adult: child ratios relate to staff time available to work directly with children. Additional staff and management resources may be required to undertake management tasks, prepare meals, for domestic tasks and to maintain premises and equipment. NS (2.12)</p> <p>-----</p> <p><b>13.2</b> The registered person has a written statement, based on the procedures laid out in the booklet 'What To Do If You Are Worried About A Child Is Being Abused – Summary' (or any national guidance which replaces this publication). This statement should clearly state staff responsibilities with regard to the reporting of suspected child abuse or neglect in accordance with local safeguarding board protocols. It includes procedures to be followed in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff or volunteer.* These procedures are shared with parents before admission to day care.  NS (13.3) The registered</p>	<p>This appears quite general</p> <p>There is very detailed safeguarding guidance in the English National standards</p>

	<p>person ensures that: a designated member of staff has attended a child protection training course and is responsible for liaison with local child protection agencies and with Ofsted in any child protection situation;- other staff are aware of child protection issues and are able to implement the policies and procedures in the absence of the designated member of staff.</p> <p>NS (3.4) ‘The registered person ensures that all staff are aware of possible signs and symptoms of children at risk and are aware of their responsibility to: report concerns to police or social services in accordance with local safeguarding board procedures without delay; - keep concerns confidential following the guidelines in ‘What To Do If You’re Worried A Child Is Being Abused – Summary’ * This is a mandatory requirement in regulations</p>	
<b>STANDARD 2 - Care,, Development and Play</b>		
Northern Ireland	<p>This guidance (IG) endorses the principles underpinning playwork and recognises that children and young people’s capacity for positive development will be enhanced if given access to the broadest range of environments and play opportunities. These will be in the Play Policy for every setting.</p> <p>The importance of observation to support individual children’s development is reinforced but, it is not necessary for these to</p>	<p>In NI the minimum standard on this area is very short and vague compared to other UK countries.</p>

	be written records of observations in childminding, out of school or crèche settings	
Scotland	<p>Scotland has three full standards focusing on this area:</p> <p><b>NCS, Standard 4</b> Each child or young person will be supported by staff who interact effectively and enthusiastically with him or her</p> <p><b>NSC Standard 5</b> Each child or young person can experience and choose from a balanced range of activities.</p> <p><b>NCS Standard 6</b> Each child or young person receives support from staff who respond to his or her individual needs</p>	There is very detailed guidance provided under each standard and inspections encourage providers to self-assess against the standards.
Wales	<p>NMS Standard 3: Assessment</p> <p>Standard 4: Meeting individual needs</p> <p>NMS Standard 7: Opportunities for play and learning</p>	Wales has three full standards that cover in detail these areas of practice in relation to daycare and childminding
England	<p>NS Standard 3: Care, learning and play</p> <p>Related to this is standard 10: Special needs (including special educational needs and disabilities)</p>	England has one generic standard for this requirement and one related section specifically for children with additional needs
<b>Standard 3: Children's Health and Wellbeing</b>		
Northern Ireland This standard is closely linked to IG <b>standard 4 Health and Safety</b>	The Children (NI) Order 1995, Guidance and Regulations, Volume 2. Minimum Standards (2012) and Implementation Guidance (2016) cover: first aid (including a *one trained staff member requirement) medicines, health and safety	<p>A cross-reference is made to other government guidance such as the Health and Safety executive and PHA.</p> <p>The regulations (1995) Reg: 5.13-5.15 are not</p>

	<p>and animals. *Must be on the premises when children are there</p>	<p>very specific but commends the practice of a 'named doctor and health visitor' for each day care provider – this appears unrealistic.</p>
Scotland	<p><b>NSC Standard 3</b> Each child or young person will be nurtured by staff who will promote his or her general wellbeing, health, nutrition and safety. <b>NCS Standard 11 (1)</b> You benefit from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the well-developed links between the service and other relevant childcare services, schools and agencies such as health and social work services in the local area;</li> </ul>	<p>Scotland has less prescriptive requirements in relation to health issues such as first-aid provision</p>
Wales	<p><b>NMS Standard 10 (10.4)</b> Parents know that they must inform the registered person or childcare service about their child's health care needs and, in consultation with the child's parent(s), those needs are addressed; taking any action that is necessary. <b>NMS 10.14:</b> At all times, at least one person caring for the children must have a current qualification in first aid appropriate for the age of the children being cared for. In calculating the ratio of adults to children, the ratio of trained persons to children should never fall below 1:10, or 1:13 in the case of open access play settings. All first aid qualifications should be kept up to date and renewed every 3 years.</p> <p><i>NMS 10.15 (CM) Child minders must have undertaken training in first aid and hold a</i></p>	<p>In Wales the first aid training requirement is more explicit in their standards. (Including childminders)</p>

	<i>first aid qualification appropriate for the age of the child(ren) being cared for. All first aid qualifications should be up to date and renewed every 3 years.</i>	
England	<p>NS Standard 7: Health There is at least one member of staff with a current first aid training certificate on the premises or on outings at any one time (NS, 7.9)</p> <p>32: Newly qualified entrants who started work between 30 June 2016 and 2 April 2017 must have either a full Paediatric First Aid (PF) or an emergency PFA certificate by 2 July 2017 in order to be included in the required staff: child ratios at level 2 or level 3 in an early years setting.[Ref: Ofsted (2017) Early Years Inspection update]</p>	This similar to other countries but Paediatric first aid (PFA) requirement was updated in 2017 so all staff must now have it.
<b>Standard 4: Health and Safety in the Building</b>		
Northern Ireland	IG Standard 4 covers all fire safety regulation, insurance and environmental health issues	Again cross referenced with other legal requirements on employers. There is a lot more in the minimum standards (MS: 2012) section on this , but in the guidance these are in the 'documentation' IG: section 15
Scotland	NCS Standard 2 The needs of each child or young person are met by the service in a safe environment, in line with all relevant legislation.	Again a less specific requirement
Wales	Under a number of standards: NMS Standard 22:	Wales minimum standards (2016)

	Environment and NMS standard 24 : Safety	provide very specific and detailed requirements
England	NS Standard 6 : Safety ‘The registered person takes positive steps to promote safety within the setting and on outings and ensures proper precautions are taken to prevent accidents’. This covers many of the areas in the NI requirement but it is a very generic	England’s national standards are written in a very general sense.
<b>Standard 5 Food and Drink</b>		
Northern Ireland	NI minimum standards are very detailed on diets and menus etc. The implementation guidance is brief and references the PHA guidance etc	The actual regulation (Reg: pg 63) is very non-specific and brief
Scotland	Gets a brief mention in NCS standard 3 (4) ‘Children and young people have access to a well-balanced and healthy diet (where food is provided) which takes account of ethnic, cultural and dietary requirements, including food allergies. Staff make sure that help with feeding is given in a way that best meets the needs of the child or young person’.	This kept very generic
Wales	NMS Standard 12 : Food and Drink This has nine very specific requirements about food preparation and diet, access to fresh drinking water is specifically mentioned.	Very detailed on this area
England	NS Standard 10 : Food and Drink ‘Children are provided with regular drinks and food in adequate quantities for their needs. Food and drink is properly prepared,	Very few details only, 4 points, again one being fresh drinking water.

	nutritious and complies with dietary and religious requirements'	
<b>Standard 6 Promoting Positive Behaviour</b>		
Northern Ireland	A very brief section in the IG guidance, two paragraphs, mainly focused on managing challenging behaviour.	NI guidance very limited compared to other countries
Scotland	NSC Standard 4 'Each child or young person will be supported by staff who interact effectively and enthusiastically with him or her.' NCS Standard 5 'Each child or young person can experience and choose from a balanced range of activities'. NCS Standard 6 Each child or young person receives support from staff who respond to his or her individual needs.	Scottish requirements have three standards (NCS) with lots 16 criteria on the promotion of the child's behaviour and development, including; 'staff will draw up and put into practice individualised educational programmes'. This reflects the wider remit of the country's early years services.
Wales	NMS Standard 4 Meeting Individual Needs NMS standard 7 Opportunities for Play and Learning NMS Standard 9 Behavior	The three Welsh standards promote and expand the NI notion of 'managing behaviour' and assess play and learning, with 31 criteria
England	NS Standard 3: 'The registered person meets children's individual needs and promotes their welfare. They plan and provide activities and play opportunities to develop children's emotional, physical, social and intellectual capabilities'.	England has 9 criteria under this standard and reference is made to the 'early learning goals (DfES).
<b>Standard 7: Working in Partnership with parents</b>		
Northern Ireland	In the minimum standards (MS) and guidance (IG) a brief	

	mention is made of a 'statements of purpose', agreements with parents, getting their views, and sharing information with them (including inspection reports)	
Scotland	NCS Standard 7 'In using the service, children, young people, parents and carers experience an environment of mutual respect, trust and open communication'. NCS Standard 9 You can be confident that the service contributes to the community and looks for opportunities to be involved in the community. NCS Standard 13 'You can be confident that the service will evaluate what it does and make improvements'	The standards and requirements in Scotland require the providers to be much more proactive in developing these concepts, than the NI standards (MS).
Wales	NMS Standard 6: Working in partnership with parents	This is similar to NI but mentions parents being more involved as volunteers and on management committees (if applicable)
England	NS Standard 12 Working in partnership with parents and carers	Limited guidance , similar to NI
<b>Standard 8: Equality</b>		
Northern Ireland	NI standards (MS) say 'The setting actively promotes equality of opportunity and inclusion for all children and their parents and staff and positively values diversity'	Guidance (IG) has one paragraph and references the Equality Commission
Scotland	NCS Standard 1 Each child or young person will be welcomed, and will be valued as an individual.	A very brief standard, staff are not mentioned (but a later 'policies' section mentions employment law etc)
Wales	NMS Standard 16: Equal opportunities Outcome: 'All children are treated with	One very short section, staff not mentioned here

	<p>equal concern and respect. The registered person is responsible for ensuring that: NMS 16.1 Equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice is promoted in the setting’.</p>	
England	<p>NS Standard 9  ‘Equal opportunities: The registered person and staff actively promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice for all children’.  ‘All children and adults are treated with equal concern and the registered person has regard to relevant anti-discriminatory good practice. The registered person promotes equal opportunities with regard to employment, training, admission to day care and access to the resources, activities and facilities available’.(NS 9.2)</p>	<p>One very short section Staff, children and parents are mentioned</p>
<b>Standard 9 Additional Needs</b>		
Northern Ireland	<p>(MS) Standards state: The inclusion, welfare and development of children who have additional needs are actively promoted, based on appropriate assessment.</p>	<p>Two paragraphs in the guidance (IG) , with ‘child in need’ article 17 (Children (NI) Order) mentioned and a policy required by the provider</p>
Scotland	<p>No specific standard</p>	
Wales	<p>NMS Standard 4 Meeting Individual needs  There are four requirements including;  NMS 4.5 The current Code of Practice for Special Educational Needs (or Additional Learning Needs) for Wales is followed. Where appropriate, a child’s particular needs are met through the provision of special equipment.  NMS 4.6 In group settings, a written policy statement</p>	<p>No stand alone standard on this but there are some quite detailed guidance and requirements in Wales (NMS)</p>

	consistent with current legislation and guidance about special needs is in place. This should cover both special educational needs and disabilities and must be available to parents.	
England	NS Standard 10 Special needs (including special educational needs and disabilities)	This standard has 7 supporting criteria and is linked to the Code of Practice (2001) for the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs
<b>Standard 10 : Management and Monitoring Arrangements</b>		
Northern Ireland	This standard (IG) concentrates on governance and , management arrangements and the roles of the ‘registered person , person in charge / manager, trustees and committees It varies depending on the type of service provided. A manager is required if there are 20+ children (Reg. 5.13) <i>* These requirements don’t apply to a singleton childminder</i>	In NI this standard is quite complex as it covers a multitude of different provider arrangements and roles. Monitoring reports and ‘self evaluation reports’ used to evidence minimum standards as required. There is no scoring system
Scotland	NCS Standard 14 ‘You can be confident that you are using a service that is well managed’.  ‘You can be confident that the manager demonstrates a high level of professional competence and skill and a thorough understanding of childcare issues’.	Scotland just uses two terms for management: • <b>‘manager</b> is the person responsible for the daily management of the service; • <b>person in charge</b> is the person who provides the service and has overall responsibility for it’
Wales	NMS Standard 14:	Each child has to have

* staffing ratios mentioned here will be discussed later.	Organisation (also linked to standard 15: staffing ratios) Manager for 20+ children (NMS 15.13) Registered person , manager and 'named deputy' roles mentioned (reg (2010) 6 and reg 9)	a 'keyworker' under this standard (NMS) in Wales
England	NS Standard 1: Suitable person NS Standard 2: Organisation	Qualifications, ratios and training are all mentioned in these two standards (NS) in England, please see NI (MS) standard 11.
<b>Standard 11: Organisation of the setting</b>		
Northern Ireland  This is the most complex and detailed standard (MS) in NI, in others countries the issues are covered in various standards and regulations, usually in less detail.  <i>'Adult /child ratios, space and resources are organised to meet the children's needs effectively and to comply with the stipulations on the Registration Certificate'</i> (MS, 11)  NB this standard also covers qualifications, training and staffing requirements'	Key points are: Maximum 26 children for this calculation (MS, pg36)  Managers and those under 18 (not usually) considered in the staff / child ratios (Reg, Pg 56)  Induction training within one month( MS, 11)  <b>'No more than 2 students</b> are on a placement in a registered group at the same time. Students must be supervised'.(MS, pg33)  Manager or deputy must be onsite at all times (full time day care) (IG pg 13) <b>Manager QCF 5 or equivalent</b> + 2 years experience <b>50% staff at least QCF level 2</b> (or 3 or 5 NVQ qualifications in Playwork and EY care and education)  Ratios: Full time (4 hours +)	This standard is very complex and covers many important issues for daycare and childminding. I have attempted to highlight any anomalies only across the UK. 'Job skills and non-employed status trainees should not be considered as staff' (Reg pg 58) Regulations don't mention students Childminding (IG) doesn't state a limit for students  Regulations are out of date in relation to qualification requirements  Keyworker role suggested (MS, 11)  (See ratios table also)

	<p>0-2 years 1:3  2-3 years 1:4  3-12 years 1:8  * with <b>two staff on duty</b> ,  unless children sleeping etc  (MS, pg 34, and guidance (IG)  pg17)</p> <p>Ratios (sessional):  Exemptions  2 years 10 months + 1:8 (max  4 children in this category) (MS  pg 35)  <b>2 staff on duty</b></p> <p>Mixed age groups (only for  exceptional short periods)  (guidance pg 18)</p> <p>School age groups max 30 in  one room (IG pg 18 )  <i>Childminder Ratios:</i>  <i>The standard recommended</i>  <i>ratios are:</i>  <i>1:3 children aged under five</i>  <i>1:6 children aged between five</i>  <i>and seven</i>  <i>1:6 children aged under twelve</i>  <i>of whom no more than three</i>  <i>are under five. (Reg, pg 64)</i></p>	<p>Regulations don't  stipulate two on duty at  all times (Reg: pg 57)</p> <p>* Mixture of age  groups (MS, pg 18) 30  mins time period or  exceptional  circumstances  allowed. Sessional  care can mix children  (IG, pg 17)  Reg pg 68/69 also  mentions group  maximum 10 under 12  years, not in guidance  (IG)</p> <p>(See ratios table also)</p>
<p>Scotland</p>	<p>In Scotland there have been a  number of initiatives on EY  qualifications , such as the  impact on pre-school of the  Schools (Consultation) )  (Scotland) Act 2010, the  consultation on the Children  and Young People's Bill and  staff registration requirements  with the SSSC.</p> <p>Changes to Managers or 'lead  practitioners' qualifications:  since 2011, a new level 9  qualification (BA Childhood  Practice Award) and registered  with the SSSC.  There are 11 levels of  qualification in Scotland</p>	<p>Staff registered with  the SSSC and  teaching qualified staff  promoted * not similar  to NI regulation – as  we have separate ETI  inspection processed  for Nursery schools  etc.</p> <p>EY staff and managers  are registered with the  SSSC (it was recently  recommended that  childminders are also  registered with the  Scottish Council.</p>

	Staffing : see standard one Ratios: See table 8888	
Wales	<p>NMS 13.6(DC) <b>The person in charge</b> has at <b>least a level 3 qualification</b> recognised on the Care Council for Wales' current list of <i>Accepted Qualifications for the Early Years and Child Care Workforce in Wales</i> or <i>Skills Active's Integrated Qualification Framework for Play work</i>.</p> <p>NMS 13.3(DC) Prior to their appointment, a person in charge (manager) has <b>at least 2 years' experience</b> of working in a day care setting.</p> <p>NMS 13.7(DC) (a) At least <b>50% of the non-supervisory staff holds a qualification at least at level 2</b> from the Care Council for Wales'</p> <p>Staffing : see standard one NMS 13.8(DC) All trainees work under close supervision at all times.</p> <p>NMS 14.4 Children aged under 2 years are cared for in groups of no more than 12. Otherwise, the size of a group never exceeds 26 children. Staffing : see standard 1 Ratios: see table 2</p>	<p>Managerial qualifications seem similar to NI in terms of experience.</p> <p>No limit to trainees in Wales</p> <p>Max size for group 26, 12 if under 2 years</p>
<p>England</p> <p>NB The regulations and guidance cover teaching qualifications for early years education</p> <p>EYFS Statutory Framework, (2017)</p>	<p>NS 3.31. For children aged under two: • there must be at least one member of staff for every three children at least one member of staff must hold a full and relevant level 3 qualification, and must be suitably experienced in working with children under two • at least half of all other staff must hold a full and</p>	<p>Ratios are linked to qualification level more e.g. if a qualified teacher is involved. Statutory framework (NS 3.33, 3.34)</p>

	<p>relevant level 2 qualification</p> <p>NS 33. For children aged three and over in registered early years provision where a person with Qualified Teacher Status, Early Years Professional Status, Early Years Teacher Status or another suitable level 6 qualification is working directly with the children<sup>36</sup>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• there must be at least one member of staff for every 13 children</li> </ul> <p>Maximum 26 children in one Unit.</p> <p>Out of schools , a ‘class size ‘ of 30 mentioned (EYFS, 3.40)</p> <p>3.41. At any one time, childminders (whether providing the childminding on domestic or non-domestic premises) may care for a maximum of six children under the age of eight. Of these six children, a maximum of three may be young children, and there should only be one child under the age of one</p> <p>3.23. In group settings, the manager must hold at least a full and relevant level 3 qualification and at least half of all other staff must hold at least a full and relevant level 2 qualification. The manager should have at least two years’ experience of working in an early years setting,</p>	<p>Similar to NI not sure if level 3 equates to our level 5</p>
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**Table 2: Ratios and age comparison**

Full time Day Care NI	Scotland	Wales	England
0-2 years 1:3 2-3 years 1:4 3-12 years 1:8	0-2 years 1:3 2-3 years 1:5 3 + years 1:8 8+ years 1:10	0-2 years 1:3 Aged 2 1:4 3-7 years 1:8 8-11 years 1:10	0-2 years 1:3 Aged 2 1:4 3-7 years 1:8
Sessional and out of school 1:8 (aged 3+) if more than 4 under 3 years 1:4	* Less than 4 hours 1:10	Play provision 1:12	Sessional and after schools discretionary
Childminding	Childminding	Childminding	Childminding
Ratio - 1:3 children aged under five 1:6 children aged between five and seven 1:6 children aged under twelve of whom no more than three are under five.	Ratio- 1:6 for children under 12, of whom no more than three are not yet attending primary school and of whom no more than one is under 1.	Ratio- Ten children up to 12 years of age. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Of those ten children, no more than six may be under 8 years of age.</li> <li>• Of those six, no more than three may be under 5 years of age.</li> <li>• Of those three children, normally no more than two may be under 18 months of age, although exceptions can be made for siblings.</li> </ul>	Ratio- Under 8, 1:6 'exceptions to the usual ratios can be made, for example, when childminders are caring for sibling babies, or when caring for their own baby, or to maintain continuity of care. If children aged four and five only attend the childminding setting before and/or after a normal school day, and/or during school holidays, they may be cared for at the same time as three other young children. But in all circumstances, the total number of children under the age of eight being cared for must not exceed six.

Standard 12: Suitable Person		
Northern Ireland  Article 124(i) and (ii) of the Children (NI) Order to ensure that all staff are "Fit" to be in the proximity	(IG) All persons with 'substantial access' need vetted. <b>Registered person/</b> chairpersons, persons in charge, deputy persons in charge and the	Ref VET/1 childminding and Day care vetting procedure

of children under the age of 12.	Designated Officer with responsibility for Safeguarding and Child Protection (if different) will be required to participate in a Fit Person Assessment	Ref: Regional fit person assessment framework
Scotland Standard 12	(NCS, 12 )You can be confident that the service recruits and selects staff and volunteers and takes account of safe recruitment practices. These include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• enhanced disclosures from Disclosure Scotland;</li> <li>• checks with previous employer;</li> <li>• taking up references; and</li> <li>• cross-referencing to the register of the Scottish Social Services Council or other professional organisations</li> </ul>	A more general standard
Wales	In all cases, the <b>registered person</b> (namely the registered child minder or registered provider of day care) is ultimately responsible for ensuring compliance with the regulations, having regard to the relevant NMS. A <b>person in charge</b> must be appointed if the registered person is an organisation and the responsible individual is not in full day-to-day charge of the childcare provision, Part 3, Child Minding and Day Care (Wales) Regulations 2010 (as amended). Any reference to registered persons includes <b>child minders</b> 'Suitable person' includes	Wales has very detailed guidance on this (NMS)

	childminders (standard 13)	
England  Schedule 1, Part 2 of the Childcare (Early Years Register) Regulations 2008, amended by the Childcare (Early Years Register) (Amendment) Regulations 2012.	<b>Suitable people 3.9. (NS)</b> Providers must ensure that people looking after children are suitable to fulfil the requirements of their roles. Providers must have effective systems in place to ensure that practitioners, and any other person who is likely to have regular contact with children (including those living or working on the premises), are suitable	The regulations include schools, daycare and childminding
<b>Standard 13: Equipment</b>		
NI , Scotland, Wales and England	Short section in Northern Irelands' (IG) : equipment should be appropriate, suitable and meet BSEN standards	Generic requirements mainly standard across all four countries and linked to the relevant health and safety requirements
<b>Standard 14: Physical Environment</b>		
Northern Ireland Minimum standards (MS pg 44, guidance pg 22)  Reg and Guidance (pg 59)	<b>(IG) 0-2 years - 4.2m<sup>2</sup></b> (this includes the sleep space for each child with a minimum of 3.2m <sup>2</sup> in the play area) <b>2-5 years - 2.8m<sup>2</sup></b> <b>5-12 years - 2.3m<sup>2</sup></b>  Sleeping: separate room for babies >2013 One cot per two babies  Food , and toileting facilities also mentioned  Childminding: No space specified	A lot of emphasis on minimum 'clear space' per child and indoor and outdoor requirements NI has higher requirements for under 2 year olds. The original regulation Reg pg 57 have the same requirements and pg 67 says; 'The space standard for children aged under twelve should be 25 square feet of clear space per child (2.3 square metres).
Scotland	<b>0-2: 3.7 m<sup>2</sup></b> <b>2 – 3: 2.8 m<sup>2</sup></b> <b>3 + : 2.3 m<sup>2</sup></b>  National care standards	Care commission can vary this

	don't mention childminding space requirements	
Wales	(NMS) 0- 2: 3.7 m2 2 years: 2.8 m2 3-12: 2.3 m2 Childminding: 0- 2 years – 3.5 m2 2 to 7(incl) years – 2.5 m2 8 to 12 years – 2.3 m2	2 year old have their own criteria in Wales
England	(NS) 0- 2 years 3.5 m2 2 years 2.5m2 3–7 years 2.3m2 Childminding not mentioned	
<b>Standard 15 Documentation</b>		
Northern Ireland Defined in art 126 Children (NI) Order but has been supplemented by guidance and minimum standards	(IG) (i) Any child looked after on the registered premises; (ii) Any person who assist in looking after any such child; and (iii) Any person who lives, or is likely at any time to be living, at those premises. Providers should also be aware that accidents may need to be reported to the Health & Safety Executive in relation to: work-related deaths/serious injuries (to staff or children) “over three-day” injuries work-related diseases dangerous occurrences (near miss accidents) (IG, pg26)	It appears that the documentation requirements have increased over the years from the original regulation. Policies and Procedure (IG appendix 1 ) <b>34 policies listed</b>
Scotland	Standard 14 (NCS) • details of the aims and objectives of the service; • admission criteria and process; • charges; • complaints procedure; • accident and incident	These are less specific than the NI guidance

	reports; • injury insurance; • contact details; • confidentiality; • emergency procedures; • child protection policy; and • whistle-blowing.	
Wales	NMS Standard 5: Records 12 requirements	
England Information and Records NS 3.68 -3.71	A general requirement non-specific	
<b>Standard 16: Complaints</b>		
NI, Scotland, Wales and England	All require a complaints policy and procedure	Similar requirements

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## **Section 7: Conclusion:**

In conducting the comparative analysis across the UK, it became increasingly obvious that the structural and regulatory differences therein, made direct comparison with Northern Ireland standards a very complicated process. This was the reason why the Republic of Ireland was not included in the project, as it would have added further confusion. In comparing Northern Ireland with England, Scotland and Wales, it was difficult to find equivalencies for some of our standards, or different terminology was used for what was in essence the same thing. At other times some of our standards and requirements e.g. ratios were remarkably similar. The core business of early years regulation and inspection across the four countries has some familiar themes and challenges.

In my opinion the sector itself is very complex, in terms of the various types of provision and the different requirements needed for each type of setting. The fact that the standards and minimum requirements have been reviewed and changed quite frequently across all countries, suggests that all regulators have struggled to find the most effective, safe and user-friendly system of inspecting and developing good standards in early years and childminding. There appears to be trend in Northern Ireland that minimum standards and implementation guidance got progressively more prescriptive, probably as a result of issues arising in practice, or perhaps ironically because of queries and guidance requests from providers. Conversely, Scotland appears to have moved considerably in the opposite direction, towards fewer standards and a more user friendly self-assessment inspection process.

The HSC Trust's dual role of inspection and developing the sector using the same personnel, could be viewed as an additional challenge, based on the feedback. Northern Ireland's 16 (MS) standards and associated regulations are very detailed in some areas, such as ratios and policies. It is obviously easier to view and inspect the more tangible and measurable parts of the service, room sizes etc. But the minimum standards (MS) appear quite limited and vague in relation to other important key areas such as measuring child development and learning. Based on the feedback it appears that some providers view inspections as a negative experience, and rarely a learning process for themselves. The HSC Trust's statutory duties to safeguard children and ensure safe practice has undoubtedly influenced its emphasis in using the standards and inspecting 'against' them.

Across the UK, the Welsh model seems the closest to our current Northern Ireland system of quite detailed regulation and minimum standards. But England (under Ofsted) seems to have moved to a more 'laissez faire' approach with more self-regulation, and transparency in terms of publishing inspection reports, and using defined categories, linked to their early years educational and development framework. The 'joined up' structure for education and early years services in

England and Scotland have produced very different structures and regulation processes compared to the Northern Ireland system. The online publication of inspections and the use of self-evaluation scoring systems, as used in Scotland, needs further evaluation and consideration. But it certainly appears to fit better with a culture of more public transparency and a model that recognises early years carers and educators as ‘professionals’, and parents and children as ‘service users’.

Finally, I would like to thank all the Early Years providers and staff in the HSC Trusts who provided feedback, and contributed to this report.

James Marshall  
Associate Leadership Centre

## **Appendix 1: References: Early Years UK comparative analysis**

### **Wales:**

Child Minding and Day Care (Inspection and Information for Local Authorities) (Wales) Regulations 2010, Cardiff:

Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010

Child Minding and Day Care (Disqualification) (Wales) Regulations 2010

Child Minding and Day Care Exceptions (Wales) (Amendment) Order 2016

Child Minding and Day Care (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2016

Independent review of childcare and early education registration, regulation and inspection, (2014), Cardiff: Department for Education and Skills

National Minimum Standards for Regulated Childcare for children up to the age of 12 years (2016) Cardiff: Department Childcare, Education and Public services

Regulation of Child Minding and Day Care (Wales) Order 2016

### **Scotland:**

A curriculum for excellence building the curriculum 2: active learning in the early years,(2006), Edinburgh: Scottish Executive

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## **Northern Ireland**

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Children (NI) Order 1995, Guidance and Regulations Volume 2, Family Support, Child Minding and Day Care Centre, Belfast: HMSO

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Department of Health, Social Service and Public Safety, (July, 2012) Regulation of Childminding and Daycare Services by Health and Social Care Trusts, Minimum Standards Belfast: DHSSPS \* for inspections

Health and Personal Social Services (Quality Improvement and Regulation) (Northern Ireland) Order, 2003, Belfast: HMSO

Health and Social Care Board, (2016), Implementation Guidance Sessional & Full Day Care Version 3, Childminding and Day Care for Children Under Age 12 Minimum Standards, Belfast: HSC

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## Appendix 2:

### Section 7: Key stakeholder feedback

As mentioned, this project was not an audit and the findings do not constitute 'research' on the Early Years sector in Northern Ireland. Some of the initial feedback was given quite late in the process, therefore only a preliminary thematic analysis and summary of the material was possible. The feedback template provided a structure for the interviews and emailed correspondence, although some respondents used the opportunity to comment on other matters. No individuals or day care providers are identified in this section, as no permission was sought.

#### The Health and Social Care Trusts:

Experienced early years staff in two H&SC Trusts (x 4 staff) provided some initial feedback on the MS, IG and inspection process. Some of the emerging themes and comments were:

- The regulations and minimum standards allow for a lot of professional interpretation and this can be both a positive and negative factor.
- The current NI standards and implementation guidance has been an improvement on the previous version, but they could be reduced further
- The minimal standards and guidance are very prescriptive on some issues , such as staffing, day care facilities and policies and procedures
- The inspection process appears to me 'more about inspection than developmental'
- The role of chairs of management committees e.g. for sponsored day care - the 'fit person ' criteria may need reviewed, as chairs change and may never be on the premises
- Ratios and ages / groups – more flexibility needed
- Delivery of level 5 managers courses problematic
- Staff thought they had good links with providers
- Childminding regulation using mainly the same day care standards 'doesn't really work'
- The range of provision needing inspection can be challenging
- The dual support and inspection roles can be confusing

#### Early years providers and childminders:

The Early Years Organisation, NICMA\*, Playboard,\* private providers 'umbrella' organisations and individual daycare providers were contacted, either directly or indirectly. In total there were approximately 10 responses, some of these were collective responses from day care providers, so it was not possible to determine the precise number.

(\*No response)

### *Registration- 'working well'*

- 'Relatively pain free' , support from the \*\*\*\*\* EY team was excellent'
- 'The registration packs are helpful, and the referral process to Early Years – the organisation for young children is a supportive first step towards registration – it prioritises support for compliance'
- Good working relationship between Early Years Organisation for young children and the early years team in \*\*\*\*\* Trust in providing support to new providers.
- Referral process is straightforward and clear
- A more flexible approach to new providers in the 'start up' phase, perhaps where some actions/amendments can be approved by the social worker immediately if all is in order, and then confirmed at panel

### *Registration - 'not working so well'*

- The time and bureaucracy involved in achieving registration is having a chilling effect on new providers entering the sector. For example, new providers – daycare and sessional – regularly report that the length of time it takes to get issues through panel is very costly in terms of delaying fee paying places. In a start up, the registration process is applied too rigidly, where providers are forced to pay for staff and overheads, and wait weeks and sometimes months on approval to increase numbers. This forced delay leads to trading at a loss and has nearly forced some providers to close altogether as they are family run businesses and the cash drain has nearly lost them their business before they have really started.
- It is also a common thing to hear that people are put off entering childcare provision because they have heard of the experiences and delays in getting registered
- A more flexible approach to new providers in the 'start up' phase, perhaps where some actions/amendments can be approved by the social worker immediately if all is in order, and then confirmed at panel
- The registration process can take a very long time to complete. One new provider met with the Early Years Specialist in May and completed the process in October. Delays include getting a room registered and staff through the fit person interview
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### *Regulations : working well*

- Very good link social worker and EY team in \*\*\*\*\* Trust
- Having a fixed and transparent regulation process is helpful as it communicates clearly what the minimum standards are
- Fixed and transparent regulation process good

### *Regulations: not working so well'*

- Vetting. Committees are not clear on the paperwork that is required at times. Confusion arises around Vet 1 and Vet 2.
- Difficulties have arisen over the recruitment of staff, specifically around having correct qualifications, especially level 5.
- Inconsistency in Social Workers advice on the application of the standards
- Approaches to risk seem to run counter to good practice in early years care and education
- Mixing age groups at the beginning and end of the day. This means that at 5 o'clock a setting could have 2 staff in each room with as little as 6 children left in the whole building
- Restrictions only being identified at the very last minute meaning the group then don't get to Panel
- A further example of this is an outdoor area who are being asked to cover the area in foam for health and safety reasons. This is not something we have seen in any other setting yet this is being explicitly required by the social worker
- Cease using the Implementation Guidelines as a mechanism to move the goal posts.
- Many of the Trust's interpretation have little to do with improving the quality of care for the child
- Private day care sector should have more say in policy changes
- Minimum standards didn't clarify the Children Order legislation
- Amount of paperwork and forms , not about improving the quality of care
- Difficulties in differentiating between legal requirements and recommendations
- Not keen on publication as it will confuse non-compliance with regulations with inspecting officer's personal opinion
- Recommendations should be open to discussion as early years staff have more experience of early years development than inspectors
- The attitude and approach if frequently negative , more mutual respect required
- Standards linked to holistic child development would greatly improve both the application of the standards, and genuinely help build solid foundations in the sector for quality provision'

### *Inspection: working well*

- Inspection process is good. Advance notification period is beneficial.
- Can be useful to have a fresh pair of eyes assess how our setting is operating
- Very good inspectors who offer advice and help

*Inspection: not working so well*

- Accuracy of inspection reports, sometimes actions will appear on the report that weren't discussed on the day of inspection.
- Policies. Staff can be asked for a new policy with little guidance on what is required.
- Don't use minimum standards as if its primary legislation
- There can be quite a lengthy delay in reports being returned to settings post inspection.
- Inspection reports are very repetitive and when a group challenges aspects of the inspection it is not always welcome. Now that reports are going online groups are very worried about this as they will be available for anyone to see and some of the "recommendations" are often communicated, and seem, as requirements and can make the group both feel and appear as though they are not complying with Minimum Standards
- Current practice of having assigned a monitoring officer, who actually doesn't visit, who is supposed to know our business, they do not carry out inspections, so that works against positively raising standards
- Unknown inspector creates unnecessary stress for staff and management
- Set a date for inspection and advise the setting
- Involve link worker more
- Avoid personal opinion in reports
- Consider using the Scottish model
- Further training for inspectors in early years and business management

Umbrella organisations:

*Registration : working well*

- Working well in 5 Trusts generally – time could be improved
- Trusts using Early Years organisations for advice works well, not all use it
- Panel discussions ok but some variance across Trusts - consistency needed

*Registration: not working well*

- No independents involved in registration and panels
- Registering Chairs as 'fit person' not necessary
- Would it be possible to have some information regarding Panel Meetings?  
This seems to be an area of confusion for members. How are the attendees/Independent Observer chosen? Does the Independent Observer have a background in/experience of, nursery management? As the sanctions are often high, is the infringement based on legislation, or opinion

*Regulation: working well*

- Would it be better to have a set of approved policies and procedures for settings
- Now that 4 years have passed since the introduction of the minimum standards, most settings have been assessed in the 4 inspection areas. Would the social working team like to have a meeting with providers to review how the inspection process has worked/findings from the process/learning going forward etc?

*Regulation: not working so well*

- The option to have nursery school and Primary 1 children in playrooms together. This is causing confusion and resulting in a reduction in numbers for some settings as children of Nursery School/Primary 1 age cannot be accommodated in playrooms.
- We are allowed to register rooms for 3-5 years. Realistically we can-not mix these age groups as it relates to pre-school and Primary 1 ages. If we are allowed to have playrooms holding 0-2 years, where the developmental ability of a child at 3 months is dramatically different to a child at 1 year 11 months, why are we not allowed to mix nursery school and Primary 1 children, where the developmental differences are slight.
- Several members again queried the adult to child ratios in playrooms. Is it possible to look at practice and research from other countries to increase the ratio requirements
- Some settings are moving to having the new 'on-floor' cots. Are these acceptable?
- One setting has stated that they use another form of sleeping arrangements – but are still required to have 1 cot for every 2 babies (even though they don't use them).
- Also, pg 23 of the guidance notes refers to 'the use of travel cots in a full day care setting is not recommended due to infection control guidance'. Does this mean no travel cots, or we are allowed to risk assess using travel cots in our settings.
- Cot bedding – several settings do not use 'own' bedding for children as laundry is collected each evening and brought back fresh the next day (cot changes during the day also have fresh bedding). Is this acceptable?
- Regulations more about 'static things' rather than outcomes for children
- Use the Scottish example, much more partnership between regulators and providers
- Childminders over regulated with standards that are day care focused
- Community based sectors have good relationship with regulators, private sector less so
- Ratios are arbitrary and not in line with European best practice (1:10)
- Two staff in all rooms is an issue as is size of rooms
- QCF level 5 not working well – experienced people not attracted to the sector
- Number of students needs reviewed, why not have more apprenticeships, there is a recruitment crisis and the sector needs to grow their own workers.
- 2/3 QCF levels need reviewed to meet the needs of early years workforce

- Over emphasis on safety and health , rather than new theories on child development and play

*Inspection: Working well*

- Environmental health input working well
- Some shared learning but we need more

*Inspection: not working so well*

- Would it be better to have the month (notice) reduced to a 2 week period. This would allow for outings etc to be continued instead of on-hold for a full month.
- Is there a need for settings to have annual inspections? Would it be better to have inspections every 2 years to free up social workers to concentrate on other areas
- Need to move to more self assessment like Scotland
- Monitoring reports too lengthy , delays in their return
- Finally, (based on my interview notes) there appeared to be little enthusiasm for online publication of reports or the use of scores, as it was felt the Trust's current inspection process was too subjective.

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