

childminding

The Scottish Childminding Association Magazine

AUTUMN 2024

Support and Inspiration

ALSO INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- What's new...
- Meet Julia for a
Childminder Chat
- 24-Hour Glitter Pick in
Aberdeen
- What does the UNCRC Act 2024
mean for you?

...and much more, plus your
regular favourites...

Dear Members,

Recognising how busy you are and the many demands on your time, we decided to adopt a different approach to engaging you in recent years, which would make it easier for you to influence our activities and support for you.

In 2020 we undertook our first **#TelISMA Childminding and You Survey**. Instead of asking you to complete a number of surveys at different points in the year, we undertook a single, large survey covering different areas where we needed your input to reduce our asks of you.

We asked for 15-20 minutes of your time in completing this and you provided a fantastic response – 38% of you provided us with invaluable data, on which to develop our work. We consulted you on our future priorities, strategic direction and what you would like us to do for you; and we captured data from you about your experiences of childminding and also your future intentions and if you still saw yourselves childminding in five years' time. In response to your feedback, we took forward your priorities:

- We invested in a new learning platform for members and have strengthened, widened and increased our Continuous Professional Learning (CPL) output, including in different forms e.g. webinars and bite-size chunks, and with a new steady pipeline of new and updated childminding-specific content.

- We shone a light nationally on the disproportionate impact that an increase in paperwork, bureaucracy and duplicative quality assurance had been having on your workloads, and established data to confirm that this was the main reason childminders had been leaving or were planning to leave our workforce.
- We also used your experience of childminding to inform campaign materials to recruit new childminders in areas where they were desperately needed, piloting our approach first in remote and rural localities, and then in urban local authority areas. To date, we have supported new childminders to establish 85 new childminding businesses, with another 15 working their way through the registration system and more coming through behind in areas without any or not enough childminders.

In 2022 we decided to repeat this approach and undertook the **#TelISMA Childminding and You Survey 2022**. Once again, we asked for 15-20 minutes of your time, and you provided an even greater response – 45% of you took part and provided us with even more invaluable data. We captured:

- Your experience of inspection and quality assurance to inform our organisational response to the Scottish Government consultation on the future of inspection in early learning and childcare and school age childcare services in Scotland. This contributed to the Scottish Government charging the Care Inspectorate and Education Scotland with developing a new Shared Inspection Framework which would be more proportionate and specific to different providers including childminders and with a significant reduction in paperwork – all things which you told us were important to you and which we then advocated for nationally on your behalf.
- Data on your business sustainability and the extent to which your businesses had recovered after the COVID-19 pandemic. This included capturing new data on the number of childminders who could afford to pay themselves the Real Living Wage (only 13%) and which also reported that during the Cost of Living Crisis, 60% of members believed they would have to turn their heating off in the evenings when their families were home to be able to afford to heat their settings during the day when children were present. This was very powerful and focused minds nationally on the needs of childminders.
- The latest snapshot of members' experiences of delivering funded ELC, which together with our workforce projections reported the need for urgent intervention.



As a result of you taking part in our surveys and our acting on your feedback – together, we have made childminding a national policy priority in Scotland.

Most recently, this has resulted in the Scottish Government funding the three-year Programme for Scotland's Childminding Future (PSCF) on childminder retention and recruitment, which is being delivered by SCMA. This includes innovative pilots to support existing childminders including on Mentoring and Funded Time Off the Floor which have the potential to be transformative if extended in future.

However, this is only part of what we are working on – in May 2024, we launched our latest three-year strategy '*Changing the Narrative Stage 2: Childminding – Providing Solutions for Scotland*' and we want you to help inform what we will do on your behalf over the next three years to further strengthen our membership support for you.

In particular, we have committed within our strategy to:

- Strengthen our CPL provision further
- Develop our practice support (including developing downloadable documentation and policies)
- Understand where your businesses are now in terms of sustainability.
- Capture a further snapshot of those of you delivering funded ELC to understand the impact of new developments - including the impact of the deferral year and of budget cuts around the country.

So, we will soon be undertaking the #TellSCMA Childminding and You Survey 2024 to capture your views on these important areas. Once again, we are only asking for 15-20 minutes of your time.

We know there is much going on and your time is precious, but the more of you who respond to our survey, the more weight and influence this will carry with others. Please help us to obtain another large response and provide us with your views, so that we can strengthen further our support for you.

Many thanks,



Graeme McAlister
SCMA Chief Executive

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What's new...

Remember, the SCMA website is regularly updated
with all you need to know about childminding in
Scotland. Visit **childminding.org**.

#TellSCMA Childminding and You Survey 2024

Have your say and #TellSCMA
about you, your business
and your needs...

Whilst we reflect positively on our current standing, we are also looking
ahead and thinking about the needs of our members. In relation to this,
we'll soon be looking for your input as we ask you to take part in our
#TellSCMA Childminding and You Survey 2024.

We always turn to you – our members – to inform and influence our
future plans and developments, which will be based on your feedback,
your needs and your experiences.

Importantly, we want to understand your
business and your requirements as
a professional childminder to help
inform the development of our
new Membership Strategy, which
will include an evaluation of current
membership benefits as we seek to
ensure we are providing you with
what you need, when you need it
and in the most appropriate format.

Keep an eye on your
inbox for an email
invitation to complete
our #TellSCMA
Childminding and You
Survey 2024.



A fresh, new-look coming soon for SCMA

Have you noticed anything different about SCMA recently?

SCMA members may have noticed a few subtle changes to the look and feel of some of the pages on our website and some posts on social media – displaying a fresh, new-look coming soon for SCMA.



More exciting changes to our appearance will gradually be introduced over the coming weeks, months and as we move into next year – as we are working to evolve our branding and typography to ensure that our materials and communications are as inclusive and accessible as possible across all our platforms.

Our refreshed logo may well be the first thing you notice; featuring the familiar brightly coloured initials, with softer tones to reinforce the supportive role we play for our members.

Over the next year we will also be working on the redevelopment of our website, and we will be reaching out to members to get your views on this soon.

Personality is crucial to our brand – it gives it life and helps us to reach and engage with a variety of audiences, reflecting our character as a national organisation. We are extremely proud to represent, support and champion the highest rated childcare service in terms of quality of care in Scotland – and collectively this is YOU, our professional childminder members.



Online Bookbug Events for SCMA Members!

The Learn with SCMA team is delighted to have been working with colleagues at Bookbug to plan two daytime, interactive sessions online for you and your mindees, plus an evening webinar for members to enhance your CPL.

Read more on page 10.

Have you logged into the SCMA Membership Dashboard recently?

Don't forget that you have exclusive access to a range of tools, support, and resources at your fingertips – all designed specifically for childminders in Scotland.

Login to the Membership Dashboard today!

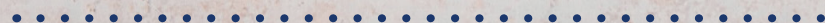
[LOGIN NOW](#)



Landmark UNCRC Legislation

In July we celebrated a historic and landmark moment for children and young people across Scotland, as the UNCRC Act 2024 officially commenced and was introduced into Scots Law.

Read more about the Act and what it means for childminders on page 13.



Answering your childminding queries



I work with a family where the parents have recently separated. My contract is only with the mum, and she doesn't want me to let the child go home with dad if he ever arrives at my setting - is this ok?



This is a question that we receive on the Helpline quite often, and it's important to remember that both parents have equal parental rights at all times, unless a court order has been issued and is in place.

In this scenario, and if a court order **has not** been issued, both parents are completely free and able to collect their child from your setting. If a court order **has** been issued, and you have seen evidence of this, the parent in question is unable to have contact with their child. In these circumstances, we would recommend that you call the Police if the parent is violating the court order.

In terms of the contract in this type of situation, the named parties are not relevant in relation to access to a child. The purpose of the contract is to set out the terms, conditions and agreement in relation to your business, e.g. fees, holidays, notice periods etc.

It is also important to bear in mind that you are a childminding business, and although you will have a positive relationship with the family - and perhaps a closer bond with one parent, compared to the other - you need to remain professional, neutral and your priority must always be the wellbeing and safety of the children in your care.

You may find it useful to speak to both parents, to explain your role in this situation, to ensure they understand what your priorities are – and even though it's human nature to offer sympathy and support, it is best to maintain a professional distance and make your position clear to both parents.

Got a question?

Login to the Membership Dashboard at childminding.org, where you can browse our bank of FAQs and find the answer you need. We cover everything from your everyday childminding practice and running your business to your ongoing self-assessment and inspection.

LOGIN NOW

Need to chat?

SCMA is here to help, and no question is too small!

Call our Helpline on
01786 449063
(Monday-Friday,
10am-4pm).



I am planning to move house later in the year – what do I need to do?



First of all, congratulations on your new home! This is an exciting time, but it can also be quite stressful and involves a lot of planning, with a whole host of things to organise. You're doing the right thing, in taking steps early to be prepared.

First of all, you'll need to think about whether the families using your service will be able to still attend your setting – and this will depend on how far away you are moving. If you're moving nearby, and the change of location won't impact on them too much, it should be a fairly easy transition for them.

You will want to notify the families using your service of the planned change of address, to make them aware, and give them an opportunity to consider their needs and whether this impacts on them.

To formally change the address of your childminding setting, you will need to apply for a variation with the Care Inspectorate – and you can do this online through their eForms system. It is important to note that this process can take up to three months to process, so the earlier you do this, the better. The Care Inspectorate will also advise on whether they want to visit the new premises, and you should liaise with them directly on this, as you won't be able to operate until they have approved your new premises.

Once your new address has been approved and processed by the Care Inspectorate, and you have transitioned to the new property, please remember to notify SCMA on **01786 445377** so we can update our records for insurance purposes.



Where can I find my SCMA insurance documentation?



As a SCMA member, you have access to the Membership Dashboard – and this is a hub for all your membership needs, including your insurance.

To access your insurance paperwork and documents, simply login to the Membership Dashboard. Click on the 'Membership' tab on the menu bar, and you will be able to view your membership renewal dates, any recent orders, and also your SCMA insurance documentation.

Within the 'Membership' tab you can download and view your latest insurance documents, your Direct Debit schedule (if applicable), and also check the status of your membership.



Information is correct at the time of publishing

Do you have something to shout about – something that is a little different, and makes your childminding setting unique? Share your story with us, and thousands of SCMA members across Scotland, and join us as we have a

Childminder Chat

Meet childminder and SCMA member **Julia Hope** from South Queensferry, who has been childminding for more than 22 years.

Why did you become a childminder?

Having four children of my own I wanted to be at home for them - so when I had my youngest, I registered to become a childminder. I was also volunteering at the local parent and toddler group, and I wanted to help other parents with childcare.

What is unique about your setting and makes your service so special?

From feedback from parents and other childcare professionals, I believe my use of the outdoor spaces around my setting is unique to the childcare I provide.

We enjoy craft activities, based around nature, take part in gardening, and grow our own food which the children choose for their snacks. I like to carefully select toys and activities that meet each child's individual needs, suit their interests, and have a clear focus on nature.

Is there a secret to your success?

Communication with parents and welcoming children - whatever their needs - is a priority for me as a childminder.

If I have a space available, or due to become available in the next few months, I make sure to contact parents who are looking for childcare in my area and arrange to meet them in my own home. Being aware of local families, and their needs, has worked well for my setting – so I'm always able to fill my available spaces.

What do you love most about your job?

I love that I am able to introduce children to my passion for gardening and the outdoors; encouraging them to grow their own food and showing them how to nurture plants and see them grow.

What is the highlight of your career?

My favourite nature and craft magazine is 'Mud and Bloom' which has been a great inspiration for ideas and activities in my setting. They contacted me with the opportunity to take part in their blog – which was a real highlight – and they were keen to see my setting and find out how I encourage children to get involved with nature, through taking part in our crafts, activities and growing plants from seed.



What tips do you have for both new and established childminders?

I would encourage both new and established childminders to use what nature gives us all year round and involve the children as much as possible.

For example, picking leaves to create pictures, going on nature walks, bark rubbing, foraging and picking wildflowers, jumping in puddles, discovering mini beasts, bird watching and learning about animals who live in our gardens. These are all completely free, and available to all!

What has helped you to continue in childminding over the years?

Surrounding myself with childminding colleagues for company, and who enjoy similar activities as me, has been crucial to my continued career in childminding. My love of gardening, the outdoors and being able to incorporate this into my childminding service has also been important - and of course, my incredible family for their support and advice.

We want to hear from YOU!

If you - or another SCMA member that you know – have something that makes you shine, we want to hear from you!

Childminder Chat aims to give you a voice, and the opportunity to tell your story – and why you love your job so much. If you would like the chance to feature in the next issue of our new 'Childminder Chat' feature, please email our team at marketing@childminding.org and tell us your story!



Aiming to introduce innovative and positive change for childminding in Scotland

Programme for Scotland's Childminding Future

You'll be aware that SCMA has been working with the Scottish Government and others to recruit much needed additional childminders through the Programme for Scotland's Childminding Future (PSCF). We're delighted that the retention strand of the Programme is also underway, as we start to test innovative measures in targeted areas for around 350 childminders across the course of the three-year Programme. Although trialled in targeted areas in manageable numbers at first, this work is intended to see what combination of measures could best help to support the wider workforce over time.

Early in September, we launched our **Mentoring** and **Time Off the Floor** pilots in targeted local authority areas. These are radical, solutions-based changes and new, meaningful ways of supporting childminders to enjoy long and fruitful careers.

The retention strand of PSCF will focus on three main areas: Quality and Learning, paid Mentoring and Funded Time Off the Floor.

Quality and Learning: Free CPL for all childminders

Through the PSCF our Quality and Learning strand will focus on providing further professional learning and resources to support quality improvement. As part of the three-year programme, we'll also trial childminder study groups and drop-in sessions to support childminders in working towards qualifications.

All childminders will have online access to three refreshed and updated Continuous Professional Learning (CPL) 'Quality in Practice' e-Learning courses. These are childminder-specific and designed to help support quality improvement and assurance, and reviewing the care provided within your professional childminding setting:

- **Translating Policy into Practice**
"This course was invaluable - it gave me a real confidence boost!"
- **Reflective Practice**
"This course was in-depth and made me really think about things."
- **Evidence in Practice**
"This course has made me much more confident about understanding and demonstrating what I do is meeting the needs of the children and families."

Did You Know? SCMA's previous 'Reducing the Burdens' work piloted access to these CPL courses in five local authority areas which has led to this wider rollout; showing how small pilots can benefit the wider workforce in the longer term. Please keep an eye on your email inbox for further information on how to access these free CPL courses.

Paid Mentoring

Early in September, we asked childminders in East Dunbartonshire, Eliean Siar, North Lanarkshire and the Scottish Borders if they would like to participate in our Mentoring pilot. This work pairs registered, experienced and high-quality childminders who'd like to be a 'mentor' - offering guidance, support, and sharing best practice with a 'mentee' - someone who feels they would benefit from guidance and support from another registered childminder.

We're aware how much quality and experience there is within the childminding workforce and taking part in mentoring trials is an opportunity to share their experience, support skills transfer and reduce isolation:

- ✔ both mentors and mentees get paid for their time
- ✔ opportunity to enhance professional development and personal growth
- ✔ increase knowledge, skills and confidence
- ✔ feel more empowered and confident

Meet the Team

Let's meet some of the team dedicated to the Programme for Scotland's Childminding Future



Nyree Cooper, Quality and Learning Development Lead

Nyree is committed to developing innovative tools and resources to reduce the workload for childminders, and free up time for what matters most – delivering high-quality care and learning. Importantly, she will champion childminder development by creating and delivering engaging learning opportunities. Her passion for the great outdoors comes second to her passion for childcare!

"I've been working in childcare for more than 30 years. When I'm not working, I love spending time outdoors especially walking and wild swimming, and I'm usually in the sea at least twice a week."



Claire Shepherd, Workforce Manager (Retention)

Claire is responsible for leading and managing the retention pilots and will work collaboratively with local authorities and the wider SCMA team on these measures.

"I know how significant testing the new measures to support childminders could be. I was a childminder for six years and fully understand the complexities of

childminding and balancing lots of different demands. I also live with my family on a working farm in Aberdeenshire – life can get very busy!"

Lisa Usher, Mentor Coordinator

Within her role, Lisa will connect experienced childminders with those who are looking for support. She'll match mentors and mentees and ensure all have the appropriate support required. After working as a childminder for nine years in Bristol, Lisa understands the wealth of knowledge experienced childminders have and how this can benefit the wider workforce.

"I have a passion for being outdoors! Whether that be walking my dog, paddle boarding with the family or finding a new beach to explore. We've recently moved from Bristol to the Isle of Bute, and we are loving our new life in Scotland."



Funded Time Off the Floor

For many years Early Years Practitioners in nurseries have benefitted from time off the floor through working within teams who can provide cover. Recognising that the majority of childminders are sole practitioners and have had to undertake non-practice activity in their own time – this strand of our retention work will trial support for childminders with funded time away from their day-to-day practice to focus on CPL, complete paperwork, or spend time on self-evaluation.

Two models will be piloted from Autumn 2024 in Aberdeen City, Glasgow, Orkney and Shetland:

- Reduced practice time (for childminders who have, or are, considering reducing their hours to provide more time to undertake non-practice commitments, such as learning, study, quality assurance and paperwork)
- Funded time back (for those who do not believe it would be possible to reduce their practice time due to the needs of families using their service)

A further model based on providing Childminder Practitioner Cover to support Funded Time Off the Floor is also under consideration.

Find out more about the Workforce Retention work of PSCF

[CLICK HERE](#)

Learn with **scma**®

Offering a range of experiences and opportunities to support your learning.



Bookbug Sessions for SCMA Childminder Members

The Learn with SCMA team is delighted to be continuing its collaboration with Bookbug to provide two FREE online interactive sessions and a webinar to SCMA members, tailored specifically for childminders and with the opportunity for your minded children to get involved too!

Taking part in the Bookbug sessions not only helps to support the learning and development of your minded children in a fun way – as they interact with the songs and stories from Bookbug – they also provide you with additional Continuous Professional Learning (CPL) opportunities.

The first session, 'Being Outdoors' took place on Tuesday 10 September, with 140 members joining us along with their mindees to explore stories and songs that encourage them to think and explore the world around them.

We received great feedback from members who attended:

"We all really enjoyed the Bookbug session this morning - thank you!"

"Thank you! My four little ones really enjoyed being able to join in with the session."

BOOK NOW Expressing Feelings

Thursday 10 October at 10am-10.45am

There's still time to book onto the second interactive session in the series, if you haven't already. You and your mindees will explore how using engaging books, songs and stories can help encourage children to understand their emotions and process their big feelings – plus our Bookbug and SCMA hosts will also be happy to take questions on the day.



BOOK NOW

Bookbug Especially for You | Webinar for SCMA Members

SCMA and Bookbug will also host a one-hour webinar on **Bookbug Theory and Resources**, dedicated to you as a childminder.

Taking place on **Wednesday 13 November at 6.45pm**, get ready to explore with us the Bookbug app, the song and rhyme library, and discover how these tools can be used within your setting. Plus, we'll also look at the underlying theory behind Bookbug, which can also be shared with families and will help complement your practice.

Members will have received an email invitation and booking reminders for these online sessions from the Learn with SCMA team, where you can follow the steps to book a place online. You can also book a space via the Learning Zone when you [login to the Membership Dashboard](#).

We really hope to see childminder members from across the country attend these events, it's a wonderful opportunity to come together online and share top tips and experiences with fellow childminders.



Bookbug



New e-Learning courses coming soon...

Tailored to Childminding in Scotland | Exclusive to SCMA Members

As members will be aware, we are continually refreshing and updating our Learn with SCMA content and presenting our e-Learning in a more engaging and attractive way. Here are the two latest courses that are being refreshed, and will be available for you to book and access very soon...



Understanding Child Development (0-3 Years)

The aim of this course is for you to gain a better understanding of child development (between 0-3 years), the theory behind it, and your key role in supporting child development for this age group. The course also supports in how best to review and develop your childminding practice.



Child-Led Planning: Creating Meaningful Experiences

The aim of this course is to help childminders understand their role in supporting children's learning and development through child-led play. Alongside this, the course encourages you to review and develop your practice in observation, assessment, and planning.

How do I book onto e-Learning courses?

Login to the Membership Dashboard, go to the 'Learning Zone' and click on the 'Eligible Courses' tab. Here you can browse the range of e-Learning courses available, click the 'Buy Now' button, and follow the steps to make your booking.

LOGIN NOW

Remember!

Always update your Learning Log once you have completed any learning activity that you've taken part in – including any courses, webinars or reading – as this will allow you to log the time you have spent gaining new skills and knowledge.

The Learning Log also prompts you to reflect on your learning and how you will incorporate it into your childminding practice, which is vitally important for your CPL and as part of your self-evaluation.



care
inspectorate

Me, My Family and My Childcare Setting

A practice note for building stronger connections and meaningful relationships

In May 2024, the Care Inspectorate launched a new publication: *Me, My Family and My Childcare Setting: A practice note for building stronger connections and meaningful relationships* which focuses on relationships between the child, the family and their childcare setting.

As a 'practice note' and guide for childcare providers and families, the document aims to emphasise the critical importance of meaningful relationships and strong connections within childcare settings.

Me, My Family and My Childcare Setting includes case studies and observations from a range of childcare providers – including childminders, who showcase the value of childminding and how family-centred it is as a childcare choice.

High-quality childcare plays a vital role in making Scotland the best place to grow up – and we know that childminding has the highest quality rating in Scotland, with 92% of childminders achieving 'good' or above across all quality ratings at inspection.

Two SCMA childminder members – Lisa Sneddon and Samantha Austin from Dumfries and Galloway – are featured prominently in the publication, where they provide key insights and outline their own experience of supporting a family-centred culture within their childcare settings.

The home-based, nurturing nature of childminding settings positively support and foster strong relationships between children, parents and carers, and their childminder.

“Children flourish when they experience a profound sense of belonging, acceptance and trust from the people who care for them. When we prioritise the significance of nurturing relationships between children and their families, we support the development of genuine connections with both the child, their family and their childcare setting.”

Audrey Donnan, Chief Inspector for Early Learning and Childcare at the Care Inspectorate



We hope that childminders will find this new publication inspirational and help you reflect on your current practice and build upon the relationships within your setting.

CLICK HERE

to download *Me, My Family and My Childcare Setting*.



This practice note complements the suite of Care Inspectorate practice notes that are already available; designed to support improved outcomes for children and families across the childcare sector.

Visit the Care Inspectorate Hub at hub.careinspectorate.com.

A New Dawn for Children's Rights in Scotland



Empowering children and young people to claim their rights

On Tuesday 16 July 2024, we celebrated a historic and landmark moment for children and young people across Scotland, as the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024 officially commenced and was introduced into law.

This means that children in Scotland now have more rights in law, than in any other part of the UK.

SCMA actively supported the vital work in advocating for this landmark legislation, as we know how integral childminders are in supporting children of all ages to know and understand their rights, feel valued and respected, and ultimately find their voice.

What does this mean for childminders?

Children rights are already very much at the heart of all legislation, frameworks and guidance relating to the childcare sector, and UNCRC Act 2024 enshrines this further.

In childminding, children's rights are already central to what you do in supporting children and young people in your setting. Using Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) as the fundamental basis for your practice, means that your service already has a rights-based approach. It's worth remembering that this aspect of your service is already inspected by the Care Inspectorate, as part of the Quality Framework (Quality Indicator 1.2; Children are safe and protected).

Childminders should continue to treat each child in your service as an individual, through engaging and listening to them, and enabling them to make their voice heard – which is exactly what the UNCRC Act asks for. You should continue to plan your service to best meets the needs of the children and families you work with.

It's important to remember that even very young infants and children are experiencing rights-based practice through their childminder, by being treated as individuals in a caring, protective and nurturing way.

Alongside childminders and other professionals, organisations and local authorities also now have a duty to ensure that any services they contract with, have integrated children's rights into their practice.

Want to get to grips with children's rights?

SCMA members can learn more about children's rights, UNCRC and participation through our 'Children's Rights: Participation in Practice' and 'GIRFEC into Practice' e-Learning courses:

- **Children's Rights: Participation in Practice** has recently been updated and explores what you currently do and explains how you should integrate children's rights throughout your practice. It also focuses on child-led participation, supporting children to understand their rights, and how childminders can evidence this.
- **GIRFEC into Practice** helps you understand the national GIRFEC model and its connection to the UNCRC, and your role within GIRFEC. This will enable you to enhance your service through a child-centred approach and helps ensure you can meet the needs of every child in your setting.

Login to the Membership Dashboard and go to 'Eligible Courses' within the Learning Zone to browse, book and begin these e-Learning courses.

LOGIN NOW



Your Toolkit of Business and Legal Support from

**ARAG**

Professional support, expertise and advice across various areas of law and business

With SCMA membership, you get automatic access to a variety of services, resources, and products from ARAG – and it really is a toolkit of professional support for you and your business.

ARAG is an innovative and highly successful UK-based organisation that works in partnership with insurers, brokers and solicitors and they are here to help SCMA members to avoid potential legal disputes. Through accessing their legal services website and expert legal advice helplines – comprehensive legal expenses insurance is provided to help protect your legal rights.

In addition, members can access ARAG's dedicated helplines and support services to help protect you, your business and your reputation.



How can I access support from ARAG?

Members can call the SCMA Helpline on **01786 449063**, where we will signpost you to the relevant service, or you can always login to the Membership Dashboard to read more about what services are available to you from ARAG.

You can also contact ARAG directly if you're needing support or have a question – that's what the helplines are there for! The advisors at ARAG will be able to point you in the right direction, and here are a few useful phone numbers:

Business Legal Advice (available 24/7):	0330 175 7922
Wellbeing and Counselling (available 24/7):	0330 000 2082
Crisis Communication Advice (available 24/7):	0344 571 7964
Tax Advice (available 9am-5pm weekdays only):	0330 175 7922
Redundancy Assistance (available 9am-5pm weekdays only):	0330 303 1955

• Example | Contract Dispute:

The parents of a child had not paid their fees and withdrew the child from the service with no notice. The member wished to use her ARAG policy to claim the outstanding payments from the parents. The parent then raised a claim against the childminder, claiming that the fees had in fact been paid, and that they were owed money due to the childminding service not being provided.

After much correspondence between the parties, ARAG was able to negotiate settlement by paying the outstanding amounts from the policy. The amounts concerned were so small it would be disproportionate to engage solicitors and the claim was settled.

ARAG

• Example | Tax Dispute:

A member in Edinburgh received a notice from the tax authorities stating that her tax return had been flagged for further investigation. Concerned about the potential implications, the childminder contacted ARAG, and with their assistance she was able to consult with a tax specialist who guided her through the audit process. This ended with HMRC requiring no further action.



Check out the ARAG Online Portal – for helpful tools and templates

As with all business and legal issues, it is best to be organised and pro-active – this is where the ARAG Online Portal can help.

SCMA members have free access to ARAG's Legal Services Online Portal, which has a range of legal documents, letter templates, factsheets, videos, claims examples and webinars designed to benefit and support your business, as well as help you resolve legal problems should the need arise.

Discover what ARAG can offer, and explore the ARAG Online Portal today...

Login to the Membership Dashboard and search for 'ARAG' in the Resources section to find the link to the ARAG Online Portal where you can read more and setup an account to access all the tools and resources. It only takes a few clicks...

[LOGIN HERE](#)

Aberdeen Childminders make the City Sparkle

Childminders and their minded children joined in with community efforts as part of the City's summer 'Glitter Pick' to help clean up Aberdeen and make a difference.



On 20 June this year, Aberdeen City Council - in partnership with Keep Scotland Beautiful - organised a 24-hour litter pick to help clean up the city.

More than 600 participants were invited, including childminders, their mindees and a number of local schools, nurseries, charities, community groups and individual volunteers.

The 'Glitter Pick' aimed to make Aberdeen sparkle on Solstice Day – the longest day of the year, and officially the start of summer – with litter picks beginning every hour over a 24-hour period across more than 40 city locations.

Highlighting the issue of litter, the fun event encouraged everyone to get involved and help out – and there was also an international angle to the event as volunteers in the city of Aberdeen in Washington State, USA also took part in their own litter pick. Spread across multiple neighbourhoods and nations, the Glitter Pick inspired hundreds of people to fill hundreds of rubbish bags.



The event was also a great learning experience for the children and young people who got involved during the daytime.

Childminder Elizabeth Howie said: *"We've been doing a whole project about recycling, litter, and the harm it does to the environment, animals – and in particular sea creatures. So, the children really did understand what we were doing."*

"They really enjoyed the Glitter Pick – learning to take rubbish home, put it in the bin, and not throw it down on the ground and make Aberdeen messy. We were helping to make Aberdeen sparkle again!"

Childminder Carolyn Houghton, who also took part with her minded children, added: *"I've always wanted to get involved with a litter pick and this was the perfect opportunity. I asked the parents if their children could join in and they thought it was a wonderful idea."*

"The little ones were very enthusiastic and loved finding the litter and using the litter pickers. It was lovely joining the other childminders too – it felt like a real team effort helping our community. We were all very proud of our efforts!"

Community champions

This is a fantastic example, once again, of childminders being community champions – and being visible, active and engaged with the people and places around them. It also instils passion, pride and the notion that we can all play our part in our community, which will no doubt have translated very positively to the children and families involved.

Steven Shaw, the Environmental Manager at Aberdeen City Council, said: *"Many thanks to our fantastic childminders for taking part in Clean Up Aberdeen's 24-hour Glitter Pick."*

"It was great to see the childminders and their minded children getting involved, and they were so positive during the litter pick – everyone was smiling and having fun! Our event was a huge success and childminders certainly helped put the 'sparkle' back into Aberdeen!"

"Many thanks to our fantastic childminders for taking part in Clean Up Aberdeen's 24-hour Glitter Pick"

Steven Shaw, Environmental Manager,
Aberdeen City Council

As well as benefiting the wider community, there are so many learning and positive wellbeing outcomes that come from taking part in an activity like this. Take a moment to think about how many of the eight **Wellbeing Indicators** (sometimes referred to as SHANARRI) would be achieved here...

Do you have an inspiring story to share?

We'd love to hear from you and share your stories in Childminding! If you, your childminding group, or your community is doing something interesting that you'd like to shout about, please email marketing@childminding.org



craft corner

Want to get creative and have fun together? You've come to the right place...

Make your own Elephant

There are so many songs, stories and interesting things about elephants – so why not upcycle an old plastic milk bottle and create your own elephant...

You'll need:

- An empty large plastic milk bottle (4-pint or 6-pint size is best)
 - Scissors
 - Nail file or sandpaper
 - Strips of newspaper or tissue paper
 - Glue (plus some water to dilute)
 - Paint and paintbrushes
1. Fully clean your empty milk bottle and allow it to dry completely.
 2. Carefully cut the bottle in half, just underneath the handle section – as the handle will form the trunk of your elephant. You may need a grown-up to help with this, as it can be tricky to cut plastic.
 3. Be careful with the sharp plastic edges – use a nail file or sandpaper to smooth and soften the edges. It may be best for the grown-up to prepare this in advance.
 4. Disregard the bottom half of the milk bottle and put it into the recycling bin. We only need the top half for our elephant – and now, we're going to use paper mâché to stabilise it and decorate it.
 5. Tear or cut strips of newspaper or tissue paper and have them ready. Then, mix one-part craft glue with two-parts water to make your paper mâché paste.
 6. Dip a strip of paper into the paste so that it is fully covered in glue and apply it onto the plastic bottle. Keep repeating this process until the bottle is completely covered, and you'll want to overlap the strips in different directions to ensure good coverage.
 7. Allow your paper mâché to dry fully – this could take a few days.
 8. Once it's completely dry, you're ready to paint and decorate your elephant – what colour are you going to choose?

Idea!

You could paint your elephant grey, to make it like real elephants in the wild – or you may want to use your favourite colour to make it unique to you! Or, you may want your use a variety of colours, or use a patchwork theme, to mirror the famous Elmer!

craft corner

Do you have an idea to share?

Have you got an idea to share with childminders across Scotland? Email marketing@childminding.org and tell us about it!

 YouTube

Find lots of craft and activity ideas on YouTube that may suit your childminding setting.

#ThinkSTEM

with Oil and Water

Why do some liquids mix, and others don't? Oil and water are two liquids that – even though they look similar – they really don't like each other and will never mix together. Let's see this in action...

You'll need:

- Baby oil
 - Water
 - Food colouring (a variety of colours is good, but not essential)
 - Shallow tray or dish
 - Dropper or teaspoon
1. Pour a thin layer of baby oil into your tray or dish – just enough to cover the base.
 2. Separately, mix the food colouring of your choice into water, then use droppers or a teaspoon to transfer the coloured water to the oil.
 3. When you drop the coloured water onto the oil, look at the way the water almost repels the oil – and it doesn't combine or mix with the oil. Each drop of colour remains visible, contained and separate from each other.
 4. If you use different colours of food colouring, you can create lots of different patterns, and you'll see that the water droplets don't merge with the oil.
 5. Why do oil and water not mix? Oil is less dense than water, which means it floats on the top of water.

Quick Ideas!

The seasons are changing – take a look out of the window and see how many changes you can spot? Here are some quick autumn-themed activities for your mindees!

- Make a colourful autumn wreath or crown.
- Create a suncatcher using a variety of autumn leaves, string and twigs.
- Experiment with leaves and other natural materials to create patterns and collages.
- Take part in mark-making and try leaf printing and leaf rubbing.
- Group different colours of leaves and arrange them to build an autumn rainbow.



Sensory Octopus Painting

Who doesn't love playing with bubble wrap and hearing the bubbles go pop! It also provides a sensory and creative play opportunity. Try out this cool 3D octopus idea...

You'll need:

- Scraps of bubble wrap
- Scissors
- Glue
- Paint and paintbrushes
- Paper or card
- Black marker pen



1. Carefully cut out a piece of bubble wrap to create the shape of an octopus's body.
2. Glue the bubble wrap onto a piece of paper or card – whilst remembering to leave enough room underneath for its eight legs.
3. Once the glue is dry, paint the bubble wrap portion with your favourite colour.
4. Using the same colour of paint, add eight legs (or tentacles) underneath the octopus's body.
5. Allow the paint to dry completely, then use a black marker pen to draw two eyes onto your octopus. What is your octopus's name?

Think!

Where do octopuses live? How do they move? Why do they have eight legs?

Think!

How many of the eight Wellbeing Indicators (sometimes referred to as SHANARRI) would these activities achieve?

Then, take things a step further and consider where they sit within the Wellbeing Wheel and across the Curriculum for Excellence.

Encouraging children to be creative will help make them more **Active** through stimulation, feel **Nurtured**, and ensure they are **Achieving**. These key words are all Wellbeing Indicators taken from the Wellbeing Wheel, which are also underpinned by the four principles of the Curriculum for Excellence.

For older minded children, ask them to get involved by helping out with the younger children. This is a great idea to make them feel **Included**, **Respected** and **Responsible** – which are also Wellbeing Indicators.

Do you know someone who is thinking of becoming a childminder?

Please signpost them to:

childminding.org/become-a-childminder, where they can find more information, browse our FAQs and download our free Guide to Becoming a Childminder.

An enhanced package of funded support and training to become a childminder is currently available in some areas.

Visit **childminding.org/getstarted** to find out if we're recruiting in your area.

Kickstart your childminding career now...



You can earn while caring for your own family



You can work with children and help to support their development



What's the best thing about being a childminder?

