<Your MP>

House of Commons

London

SW1A 0AA

Dear <Your MP>,

I am writing to alert you to a situation that is adversely affecting me and other Ofsted-registered childminders in England.

We are a vital source of high quality, flexible childcare and early education for thousands of children and families. As many as 162,000 places for children under 5 in England are provided by childminders and ninety-eight per cent of childminders are rated good or outstanding by Ofsted.

The Government is committed to expanding the funded early education and childcare offer and as childminders we will play a key role in delivering this ambitious expansion. **However, we are not currently permitted to deliver government-funded hours to any children who are related to us**. This rule is forcing many parents to take their child out of our settings, regardless of their personal preferences and the best interests of the child and the wider family. This greatly disrupts continuity of care, particularly impacting children with SEND. Simply put, funding should follow the child, not the other way round.

<Can you give examples from your experience? >

The Government argues the Childcare Act 2006 excludes care provided for a child by parents or any other relatives. However, this explanation doesn’t hold water, as other vital forms of childcare support, including Tax Free Childcare, childcare vouchers, and the childcare element of Working Tax Credit and Universal Credit, do permit parents to use related childminders, as long as they are Ofsted-registered and caring for the child outside the child’s home. There is no evidence that this is being abused. In addition, the ban only applies to childminders, not staff in group settings such as pre-schools and nurseries.

I believe this is unfair on childminders like me and the families we support, and it ignores the fact childminders are working to the same standards and regulations of other forms of childcare. In 2018 the Welsh Government changed its policy to allow childminders in Wales to provide funded places to related children who do not live with them from September. It is time for the Government to give the same right to childminders in England.

**The Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years (PACEY) is calling on the Government to permit parents in England to use related childminders for government-funded early education and childcare, as long as the childminder is registered with Ofsted and the care is being provided outside the child’s home.**

I hope you will support this proposal by writing to Stephen Morgan MP, Minister for Early Education, to ask him to act before the September funding expansion, when more childminders and families will be affected. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

<Your name>