



Early Years COVID-19 Recovery: Childminder Mentor programme – Information for childminders

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Background

The Early Years Childminder Mentor programme from the Department for Education is focused on supporting early years childminders, to address the impact of the pandemic on the youngest children.

The programme is available **nationally**, across England.

Selected childminders will receive the support of a Mentor for **one term**, between May 2023 and July 2024. At the end of each term, Mentors will move on to support a new group of childminders.

Mentors will offer mostly **online support**. Groups will be allowed to meet face-to-face, if this is feasible for both the Mentor and the childminders they are supporting.

Who is eligible to receive support from this programme?

To be eligible to receive support from the DfE Childminder Mentor programme, childminders must **currently** be providing childcare to children aged between 0-5 (to at least one child).

You can apply for support as an individual, or with other childminders as part of a small group (of up to 4 people).

If you apply as an individual, you will be placed in a group with others.

Who will deliver the support to childminders?

There are 2 different roles within the programme who will provide support to childminders: **Mentor** and **Area Lead**.

The **key difference** between the role of Area Lead and Mentor, is that Area Leads will also be responsible for supporting the Mentors in their area.

Area Leads and Mentors all have at least 3 years' experience in the childminder sector. They are childminders themselves, or former childminders. They may also be staff who currently work in childminder roles within Local Authorities (LAs), childminder agencies (CMAs) or similar organisations.

Where Mentors are current childminders, they must have an Ofsted rating of 'good' or 'outstanding' (or CMA equivalent). Former childminders must also provide their most recent rating and fit these criteria.

All Mentors and Area Leads have attended formal training for their role, which has been organised by DfE and our training partner, Hempsall's. They must complete all training before they can begin offering support to childminders.

What are the benefits of joining this programme?

By joining the programme, you will receive the support of fellow childminder professionals, who are passionate about supporting others to improve practice and outcomes for children.

This support is **free** and available across the country.

Some of the main aims of the programme include:

- Supporting childminders to identify strengths and areas for development within their setting and providing guidance in action planning.

- Supporting childminders to improve confidence or knowledge of child development
- Supporting childminders to build confidence following uncertainties of the pandemic
- Supporting childminders with implementation of the EYFS framework 2021
- Supporting childminders to plan, deliver and refine an effective curriculum
- Providing advice for supporting children with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) or English as an Additional Language (EAL)
- Supporting childminders to build strong relationships with parents and carers

How much time is required for this programme?

Mentors will provide up to **4 days** of support to childminders over one term, between May 2023 and July 2024.

The 4 days will be broken down into hours, to suit the Mentor and the childminders they are supporting.

We appreciate childminders very busy schedules so are asking Mentors to be flexible with their time. For example, to be available during evenings and weekends.

As part of the application process, we also ask the childminders requesting support from the programme to identify the most suitable time for them.

Wherever possible, we will match people together with similar preferences.

How to get involved to receive support

Please submit the '**Request for Support**' application form on Hemsall's website available [here](#).

If you are interested in receiving support for one term during the next academic year, from September 2023 to end of July 2024, please complete the form linked here. Childminders will be able to obtain one term of support.

Closing dates for each term are as follows:

- to access support for the autumn term the deadline for submission will be 31st July 2023,
- to access support for the Spring term the deadline for submission will be 30th November 2023 and
- to access support for the summer term the deadline for submission will be 17th March 2024.

If you have any questions about the application process, please contact Hempsall's at Childminders@hempalls.com

The DfE have reached out to local authorities (LAs) across England to raise awareness of the Childminder Mentor programme. LAs can also recommend childminders in their area, who they think should receive support through the programme.

Please note, childminders who are receiving the support from this programme, will not receive any funding to take part.