



7<sup>th</sup> October 2014

Dear Ministers,

As you may be aware many childcare services are currently awaiting payment for delivery of government schemes such as TEC. At present the delay is 6-7 weeks.

As a result of this delay practitioners are not receiving their wages or are seriously concerned that their next wage payment will not be made and therefore they will not be able to pay their utility bills, mortgages, etc.

The majority of these practitioners are on little more than a living wage, if even that. Many are themselves in receipt of subsidies such as FIS.

Providers are unable to purchase materials needed to deliver a quality service to the children and they are unable to pay the bills associated with running a business. Many providers have not taken a wage in weeks so that they can afford to pay their staff.

This government continues to talk about increasing quality in early years. Services are expected to maintain and increase quality of provision. Practitioners are expected to gain higher qualifications and to engage in Continuing Professional Development.

Quality in early years care and education can only be increased when this government realises that it cannot be done without the support and good will of the practitioner who is working with the child each day.

Practitioners must be respected and valued if they are to support young children at this key stage in their development. All government policy documents agree with this statement yet when implementing policy the practitioner is the last person to be considered or consulted.

This situation is unacceptable and if this government is serious about increasing quality and providing for the children of this state then there needs to be a comprehensive revision of the much touted quality agenda in childcare to include the remuneration and resourcing of practitioners and providers so that these professionals can afford to continue in their work and increase quality of provision.

Our members are calling on each of you to take us seriously and not to undermine our work through lack of consultation, delayed payments, reduction in capitation payments, lack of investment, etc.

We would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you at your earliest convenience so that we can discuss these issues and work together to find a meaningful solution.

Regards,

Marian Quinn