

PROJECT TITLE SUITABILITY CHECK FOR CHILDMINDERS

Goal:

To safeguard and protect children of 0-4 years old from risks of harm or ill treatment within childminding settings

Objective:

To determine the suitability of childminders and their setting through a screening process

Background and Rationale:

It is important that children are safe from ill treatment and abuse in whatever setting they find themselves. Ensuring safe environments for children is an important aspect of child protection. Practitioners in child protection services have for a long time stressed the need for checks for people seeking to work with children. This is in keeping with the local and international standards especially the Convention on the Rights of the Child which Seychelles ratified in 1990.

The Social Affairs Department is the lead agency in child protection. A suitability check for childminders is part of the department's strategy to take a more proactive and structured role in child protection rather than leaving it to chance or depending on individual vigilance.

Currently, there is no vetting being undertaken for childminders as there is no mechanism to take this on board. The introduction of a working with children suitability check for childminders will ensure that people who intend to work in the childminding service are vetted and are deemed qualified to work with children.

This stage of the project intends to look at the childminding service to support the work being done by the IECD and to support the National Standards for Childminding Services. A large majority of children spend the greater part of their day in the homes of childminders. Ensuring that those places are safe is an important component in the effort to regulate this sector.

The vetting will target the childminders and individuals who are likely to have direct contact with the children being cared for. It will include screening of criminal records, background checks and professional conduct to prevent those who pose unjustifiable risk to children from working with or caring for them. The aim is to ensure that environments where children play and learn are safe from ill treatment.

Description:

The Social Affairs Department will lead this initiative as part of its child protection mandate. Its successful implementation will depend on the partnership between the Department and the Institute of Early Childhood Development. Other agencies which will have a stake will include the Police, Attorney General's Office and the Ministry of Health. It is expected that at consultation stage other important agencies will have the opportunity to contribute towards the process of developing this mechanism especially in terms of best practices and individual experiences with such systems at the international level.

The main activities to be implemented are as follows:

- Consultation with partners for the purpose of information gathering
- Developing a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) manual
- Developing the appropriate tools for screening
- Setting up multi stakeholder panels
- Sensitizing all Childminders
- Implementation of the suitability check for Childminders

Budget narrative:

The estimated cost for the project is SR40, 000. This includes the cost for the consultation, sensitization sessions and printing and stationary. The costing also takes into account the need to consult stakeholders on Praslin and La Digue. The possibility of cost sharing will be explored between the two main partners (IECD and the Social Affairs Department).

Expected outcome:

Policy and procedures in place and links with key agencies established to operate suitability check for Childminders

Performance indicators:

- Results of the vetting process
- Level of satisfaction of the key agencies with the vetting mechanism