Dear <insert MLA/Councillor name>

I am writing to express my deep concern at recent indications from the Department of Education that financial support for the *Bright Start* fund is likely to cease at the end of June 2023. *Bright Start* has been a key mechanism for supporting School Age Childcare provision across Northern Ireland and termination of funding will have a devastating impact on children, young people and families.

The impacts of the cessation of *Bright Start* funding will be significant at a range of levels, not least on:

* School Age Childcare settings in receipt of *Bright Start* funding who will potentially be forced to close
* Children and young people who will lose access to quality, play-based childcare which supports their development, learning and well-being
* Parents/carers who will lose access to quality childcare, potentially affecting their ability to remain in employment, and
* Staff within setting who will face job uncertainty due to the loss of funding.

As an elected official for my area I would ask for your support in overturning this decision which will see the end of a service that not only provides parents/carers with access to essential childcare but also supports the health and well-being, social, cognitive and physical development of our children and young people.

Whilst I appreciate that the budgetary pressures facing departments are significant, continuation funding for *Bright Start* and continued investment in School Age Childcare provision is essential if we as a society are to support children, young people and families. I am calling on you to do all that you can to intervene in this situation and to advocate for the continuation of *Bright Start* funding.

Yours sincerely

(signed)