

'We're sick of being exploited,' say under-paid childcare professionals ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

More than 300 Irish childcare professionals protested outside Leinster House over low pay as they warned strike action is edging closer.

A number of childcare centres across the country closed yesterday in order for management and staff to attend the protest in Dublin, while more held protests inside their facilities to demonstrate their anger at poor pay conditions.

The centres are set to unite in the New Year in further protest, as parents and local representatives have been invited to childcare facilities to see the work put in and the salaries they receive.

Childcare professionals are pushing the Government to provide more funding for their sector.

If that doesn't work, they will consider strike action, according to head of the Association of Childcare Professionals (ACP), Marian Quinn.

"It is decimating us, providers can't get staff now, because they are leaving, it is becoming a big crisis for us," she said.

"We are looking for the Government to put together a plan so that there is a sustained increase in subsidisation and investment that is tied to pay scales - so to make sure that a person with qualifications and experience is going to come in starting at a particular level. Five years ago people wouldn't have allowed you to mention the word strike, they would just say we can't do that, but the thing is now we have reached crisis point where they cannot get employees so we are getting closer to having to take that action."

Manager at Tír na nÓg childcare in Ballybunion, Co Kerry, Grainne Toomey, closed her service and travelled to Dublin in protest with staff.

"We are sick of being exploited," she said.

-reprinted from the Irish Independent

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