



OFFALY COUNTY CHILDCARE COMMITTEE



WEEKLY NEWS BULLETIN

12th May 2025



IMPORTANT DATES, DEADLINES AND DCEDIY PRESS RELEASE

Here you will find details and reminders of important upcoming deadlines along with DCEDIY current press releases.



OCCC UPCOMING EVENTS

Here you will find details of all our upcoming training events with links to bring you directly to Eventbrite.



HIVE NOTIFICATIONS

Here you will find the most recent Hive notifications and details on Compliance for ECCE and NCS.

CONTACT DETAILS



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An Roinn Leanaí, Michumais
agus Comhionannais
Department of Children,
Disability and Equality





IMPORTANT DATES AND DEADLINES

<u>NCS Compliance Inspections – 2024/2025</u>	On-going
NCS Weekly Returns to be completed between Monday morning and Tuesday afternoon	Weekly
AIM non-term application for Summer 2025	Now Open
Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) Level 4, 5, and 7 standard applications for 2025/2026.	Submit applications at least three months before a child's planned ECCE start date.
Core Funding Review & Confirm	2nd May - 14th May 2025
The Annual Early Years Sector Profile (AEYSP) Survey 2024/2025.	27th May 2025
Proposed New Service Applications - Tulsa	1st June 2025
Always Children First Safeguarding Awareness Training	28th June 2025
Change of Circumstances - Tulsa	1st July 2025

New Applications and Change in Circumstances 2025

Every year, there is a significant increase in the number of applications to establish new early years services or to make changes to existing services in time for the new academic year. We recognise the challenges providers experience to have everything in place and would like to re-iterate the importance of early preparation and submission of applications to be assured of approval within your prospective timeframes.

If you are trying to open a new service or make a change to an existing service to take effect in September 2025 period, please take note of the following timeframes for approval:

Proposed New Service Applications



All potential early years and school age care service providers must submit **a complete application** at least 3 months before intending to commence operation of an early years or school aged care service.

Fully completed applications (**which includes the submission of all required documentation**) for proposed new services that are submitted before **01st June 2025** will be approved for opening in September 2025.

Applications submitted after this date are unlikely to be approved in time for a September opening date.

All new applications for preschool settings currently require a fit for purpose inspection and time taken to complete same. This should be factored into your preparation.

Change in Circumstance Applications



In accordance with the Regulations, a Registered Provider must submit a complete change in circumstance application at least 60 days in advance of the proposed change.

Fully completed applications (**which includes the submission of all required documentation**) for change in circumstances that are submitted before **01st July 2025** will be approved for operation in September 2025.

Applications submitted after this date are unlikely to be approved in time for the beginning of the new academic year.

Please note that some categories of change requests such as change of service type to part time or full day, change of address and increase of numbers may require a fit for purpose inspection and time taken to complete same. This should be factored into your preparations.

Important Information for all applications:

- To ensure a fair and transparent process for everyone, **complete applications** are dealt with in order of date of receipt. As soon as applications are submitted an automatic acknowledgement email will be sent. The registration team will then review and assess each application and liaise with you.
- **Only applications with all the required documentation submitted are processed.**
- While an application is being processed, we will communicate with you regarding key stages of the application. For example, we will advise you if information is missing, where the service has been passed to our inspection team for a 'fit for purpose' inspection and when the application is approved or closed.
- We do not provide daily updates as this would take us away from the work of processing the applications themselves. We ask that you are patient and allow us to undertake the necessary work. Where information is submitted correctly, we will process all applications as quickly as possible.

- We will only provide updates and respond to queries from the registered provider concerning an application, we do not provide information to third parties.

We make every effort to support providers during what is understandably an anxious and stressful time. However, we are seeing an increase in our officers experiencing threatening, rude and/or abusive conduct. Please be advised staff have been instructed to terminate such calls and the matter will be referred to a senior manager. This conduct will not be tolerated under any circumstances so please ensure you treat our officers with respect.

We will continue to work hard to support providers to complete their applications successfully. We ask that providers:

- read the information available on the website carefully
- understand the required timescales
- ensure that all necessary documents are submitted for each application
- work with our staff through the relevant application process

The Early Years Inspectorate takes no responsibility for late or incomplete applications.



NATIONAL CHILD SAFEGUARDING PROGRAMME

for Early Learning & Childcare Services



ALWAYS CHILDREN FIRST: CHILD SAFEGUARDING AWARENESS TRAINING

This accredited training course will enable participants to

- Gain a deeper knowledge and understanding of how to recognise and respond to child protection and welfare concerns.
- Consider child-centred practice as a key part of child safeguarding and how you might implement child centred practice.
- Gain a clear understanding of your role and responsibilities in relation to keeping children safe and promoting their welfare to enable them to achieve their full potential

Booking Conditions

- ✓ Training participants must complete the Tusla eLearning programme prior to attendance of this course.
- ✓ Open to all early years practitioners working in a childcare service in County Offaly, including those in DLP or Mandated Person roles
- ✓ Maximum booking of 2 people per service, service must be based in Offaly
- ✓ Cost per participant: €10



057 9135878



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An Roinn Leanaí, Comhionannais,
Míchumais, Láimhdeiríochta agus Oige
Department of Children, Equality,
Disability, Integration and Youth



- **Date:**
Saturday 28th June 2025
- **Venue:**
O'Connor Square, Tullamore, Co.
Offaly, R35 Y7P0
- **Time:**
9.30am - 4.30pm

CLICK HERE TO REGISTER

Hive Notifications

Reminder: Core Funding May Review and Confirm closing 14 May

Dear Service Provider,

This is a reminder that the May Review and Confirm window for the 2024/2025 programme call will close on 14 May 2025.

This makes sure that Core Funding payments continue by allowing Partner Services to check their most recent application information. Partner Services can then choose to:

1. Review and Confirm with Changes
2. Review and Confirm without Changes

Partner Services with an approved May Review and Confirm record can auto-populate their original Core Funding Application Module for the 2025/2026 programme year to help reduce administration. More information will be provided soon.

Before completing the Review and Confirm, Partner Services should:

- Make sure data captured in the Service Profile is accurate and up to date for the 2024/2025 programme year. This includes hourly rates of pay for staff members.
- Make sure your most recent Core Funding application status is 'Approved.' If it is 'Referred back,' fix the issue and complete the May Review and Confirm process once its status is 'Approved.'

If your most recently 'Approved' Core Funding application record has an 'Update Due Date' on or before 2 May 2025, please action it when completing your Review and Confirm. Use the 'Review and Confirm with Changes' option to replace the departed staff member, or reduce your capacity.

When the Review and Confirm window closes, Core Funding payments will continue as per the schedule on the Early Years Hive, as long as your May Review and Confirm status is at 'Approved.'

You can find Core Funding support and training materials in the [Help and Support](#) section of the Early Years Hive.

Regards,
The Early Years Team

Hive Notifications

Annual Early Years Sector Profile 2024/25 survey launch

Dear Service Provider,

Annual Early Years Sector Profile 2024/25 survey launch

We are pleased to advise that the Annual Early Years Sector Profile 2024/25 survey will be available on the Early Years Hive from 2pm today, Tuesday 6 May.

The survey is open until Tuesday 27 May 2025 is available [here](#).

The Annual Early Years Sector Profile is:

- running for 23 years
- developed and administered by Pobal on behalf of the Department of Children, Disability and Equality (DCDE)
- the primary data source on the Irish Early Learning and Care (ELC) and School-Age Childcare (SAC) sector
- a comprehensive national analysis of over 4,700 ELC and SAC services throughout Ireland

By providing a snapshot of the key information about the sector at a point in time, the survey plays a central role in monitoring trends in the sector, informing policy development and assessing the impact of policy change.

The Annual Early Years Sector Profile includes data from two main sources:

- administrative data from the Service Profile on the Early Years Platform, and
- the survey questionnaire which collects additional data which is not captured through the Service Profile e.g. enrolments, vacancies, and additional detail on staff.

Hive Notifications

It is important that the data in your Service Profile is up to date at the time of the Annual Early Years Sector Profile survey. Please make sure your Service Profile has been updated on the Early Years Hive on or after Friday 2 May. This make sure that the most up to date information is included in the data collected for Annual Early Years Sector Profile.

While we encourage all services to complete the survey, completing this year's survey within the open window is mandatory for all existing Core Funding Partner Services. Services who wish to become a Core Funding Partner Service in the future, must also complete the survey before submitting their Core Funding application. The survey not only gives information about the sector, but it also collects data to monitor the impact of Core Funding on the sector.

Guidance documentation and training videos are available on the Early Years Hive to help you complete the survey. In addition, City and County Childcare Committees will be available to assist. More information about the Annual Early Years Sector Profile and data published through interactive dashboards are available on the [Early Learning and Childcare Data website](#).

Many thanks in advance for sharing this valuable information about your service.

Regards,
The Early Years Team

Hive Notifications

Checks to ensure that hours of school and ECCE attendance are not included in NCS registered hours

Dear Service Provider,

Checks to ensure that hours of school and ECCE attendance are not included in NCS registered hours.

As you are aware, the purpose of the National Childcare Scheme (NCS) is to provide financial support for parents towards the cost of their childcare with a service provider. The hours of care required are agreed between the parent and the service provider. Once agreed, then the hours claimed under NCS should reflect this arrangement.

It is important to note that the child should only be registered on NCS for hours that they require and intend to be present in the service. In particular, NCS subsidised hours cannot be claimed for hours that the child is in education (i.e. ECCE or school).

For ECCE and school-age children, NCS subsidised hours can only be claimed in the following scenarios during term time:

- childcare used before preschool or school starts in the morning (e.g. a breakfast club)
- after-school childcare

Children may attend for additional hours on school closure days. Confirmation of your compliance with the rules above can be reviewed as part of compliance inspections. Services are therefore advised to have details of school calendars and school opening/closing times on file for school-age children who attend their facility.

We want to take this opportunity to thank services in advance for your continued co-operation with compliance checks.

Kind regards,
Pobal & DCEDIY Compliance Teams

Hive Notifications

ECCE compliance

It is the responsibility of the Service Provider to ensure compliance with their contractual requirements. Service providers should ensure that they understand and adhere to the ECCE Funding Agreement. Failure to do so will result in non-compliance and will require corrective action.

In order to make compliance visits as efficient as possible for both providers and visit officers, service providers should ensure that their compliance file is kept up to date and contains:

- Attendance records
- Enrolment details (including minimum enrolment exemption where relevant);
- Parental declaration forms
- Parent letters
- Fee records
- Staff qualifications
- Higher capitation forms

The below documents offers guidance for service providers on ECCE compliance:

- [ECCE Compliance Checklist 23-24](#)
- [ECCE Compliance Approved Provider Guide 23-24](#)
- [ECCE Post-Inspection Rectification Actions 23-24](#)
- [ECCE Good Practice Guide for Attendance Records](#)



National Childcare Compliance

- [Accessing the NCS Compliance Report on Hive](#)
- [NCS Compliance Checklist](#)
- [NCS Compliance Service Provider Guide](#)
- [NCS Post Inspection Rectification Actions](#)

Hive Notifications

ECCE compliance

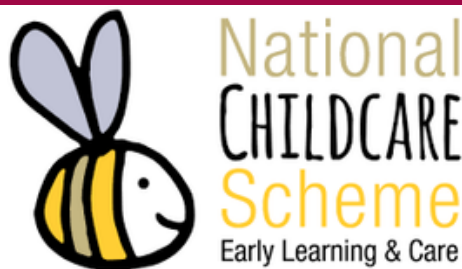
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National Childcare Compliance

- [Accessing the NCS Compliance Report on Hive](#)
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Hive Notifications

CCSP Saver Programme compliance

It is the responsibility of the Service Provider to ensure compliance with their Funding Agreement requirements. Failure to comply with any of the terms of the Funding Agreement may result in the suspension of CCSP Saver Programme Funding and/or DCEDIY funding or part thereof may be withdrawn and/or a termination of this Funding Agreement.

In order to make compliance visits as efficient as possible for both providers and visit officers, providers should ensure that their compliance file is kept up to date and contains:

- Attendance Records
- Service Fee Information Letters
- Parental declaration forms;
- Parent/guardian letters;
- Fee records;
- Staff qualifications and letters of qualifications;
- Grandfathering declarations as applicable;
- Evidence of Tusla registration(s).

The compliance file must be kept on site and available for inspection at all times.

Services should also ensure that:

- Registrations are correct,
- Fees list and calendar, for all approved funding programmes, are clearly displayed for parents and,
- **There is a staff member on site at all times who has access to the compliance file and can facilitate the visit. Failure to do same could result in a service being found non-compliant.**

Please note that if the records are readily available for review any interruption to the service will be minimal, other than seeking clarifications when required.

To assist services to comply with the CCSP Saver Programme requirements, the Department and the Scheme Administrator provide a range of training and supports.

These include:

- [CCSP Compliance Checklist 23-24](#)
- [CCSP Compliance Approved Provider Guide 23-24](#)
- [CCSP Post-Inspection Rectification Actions 23-24](#)

Providers are strongly encouraged to engage with these supports, both before and after compliance visits, to ensure that they maintain compliance with scheme rules.

Hive Notifications



AIM Level 7 Compliance

AIM Level 7 compliance checks will be commencing on AIM Level 7 payments from the week beginning 22 April 2024. This will involve a series of standardised checks on AIM Level 7 approved capitations relating to additional assistance in the pre-school room and the maintenance of reduced ratios.

The compliance checks are aimed at confirming adherence with AIM Level 7 rules and contract conditions as set out by the Department of Children Equality Disability Integration & Youth (DCEDIY).

To ensure the compliance checks can be conducted at unannounced inspections, please ensure that the person in charge on-site has access to the following records to present to the Visit Officer for review:

- The child attendance records for each of the ECCE sessions attended by child/ren benefitting from AIM Level 7
- The Staff Qualifications for staff working in these ECCE session/s

The Pobal compliance team have uploaded additional compliance support documents to the Hive in order to assist services in preparing for a compliance inspection. The documents, which are listed below, are available under the Resources section and can also be accessed through this link

- [AIM Level 7 Compliance Guide for Approved Providers 2023 - 2024](#)
- [AIM Level 7 Compliance Checklist for Approved Providers 2023 - 2024](#)
- [AIM Level 7 Rectification Actions Guide 2023 - 2024](#)

Please note - these documents are only supports, intended to assist you. There is an onus on each provider to familiarise themselves with their responsibilities under the AIM Rules (AIM Level 7 included) and contractual conditions.