



OFFALY COUNTY CHILDCARE COMMITTEE



WEEKLY NEWS BULLETIN

16th June 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.
Programme Readiness for 2025/2026	Now Open
Always Children First Safeguarding Awareness Training	28th June 2025
Change of Circumstances - Tulsa	1st July 2025
Always Children First Safeguarding Awareness Training	28th June 2025
QIPP Report Template for 2024/2025	31st July 2025

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



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- **Date:**
Thursday 17th July 2025
- **Venue:**
O'Connor Square, Tullamore, Co. Offaly, R35 Y7P0
- **Time:**
9.30am - 4.30pm

CLICK HERE TO REGISTER

Hive Notifications

AIM Level 5 Equipment Journey Infographic

Dear Service Provider,

An Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) Level 5 Equipment Journey Infographic is now available under the Help & Support section on the Early Years Hive.

The infographic provides a snapshot of the journey of AIM Level 5 Equipment. It outlines the process from application, through to appraisal and ordering. Finally, it covers the Transfer of Ownership stage, whereby a child has completed Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) and is moving on to their chosen National School/Specialised School.

We hope this infographic will support you as a service provider, when submitting an AIM Level 5 Equipment Application and indeed, when completing AIM Level 5 Transfer of Ownership applications.

Regards,

The Early Years Team

Hive Notifications

Programme Readiness for Core Funding 2025/2026 is now available

Dear Service Provider,

The application process for the Core Funding 2025/2026 programme year is now available. Before submitting a 2025/2026 Core Funding Application, Partner Services must make sure their Service Profile is up to date, and that they have completed the 2024/2025 Annual Early Years Sector Profile Survey.

Please note, Partner Services need to maintain their 2024/2025 Core Funding Application information until the end of the programme year. Partner Services are advised to keep their Core Funding 2024/2025 information up to date before updating their Service Profile, ahead of applying to Core Funding for 2025/2026.

Key Update to the Core Funding Application Module 2025/2026

Partner Services who have completed the May Review and Confirm process and are at an 'Approved' status will have the option to auto-populate their new Core Funding Application Module for the 2025/2026 programme year using the information from the most recently 'Approved' Core Funding Application 2024/2025.

All retrospective Update Due Dates's (UDD) on the previous programme year Core Funding Application Module 2024/2025 must be actioned before starting the Core Funding Application Module for 2025/2026 programme year.

Hive Notifications

Submitting a 2025/2026 Core Funding Application

You can submit a Core Funding application for the 2025/2026 programme year on the Core Funding Application page under the Programme menu.

Once the 2025/2026 application has been submitted, you will have a 21-day window to activate the Core Funding Partner Service Funding Agreement 2025/2026 on the All Programme Applications under the Programmes menu.

If your service needs support completing an application, resources are available on the **Core Funding Documents page**. Your local City/County Childcare Committee (CCC) can also provide support with completing your Core Funding Application Module.

Guidance

- Copies of the Core Funding Partner Service Funding Agreement 2025/2026 and Core Funding Rules Document 2025/2026 can be found on the **Core Funding Documents page**.
- Guidance on completing the programme readiness steps and activating a funding agreement for **Core Funding** can be found under the relevant headings on the Help and support page.

Supports

Training: Training on programme readiness, the Fee Table and the Parent Statement is being held on 9 and 10 June. Training invites were posted on the Announcement page on 30 May.

A pre-recorded training webinar is available **here**.

The PowerPoint slides and a questions and answers document will be available once both training sessions have been completed.

Checklists: A programme readiness checklist can be found **here**.

Help and support: If you have any questions about programme readiness, contact the Early Years Provider Centre (EYPC). Simply raise a Request on the Early Years Hive by selecting the Core Funding programme and your request type from the dropdown menu.

Hive Notifications

QIPP Reporting Template

Dear Provider

The Core Funding Quality and Inclusive Practice Plan (**QIPP**) **Report Template** 2024/2025 is now open for completion on the Core Funding Contractual Requirements Reporting System Portal, <https://www.cfcrrs.ie/>.

While we strongly encourage you to complete your 2024/2025 end-of-year QIPP Report by **Thursday 31 July 2025**, it will still be possible for you to make changes and submit your QIPP Report until Tuesday 30 September 2025.

To complete the QIPP Report, the Primary Authorised User (PAU) or Quality Authorised User (QAU) will log into the CFCRRS, open the Quality and Inclusive Practice Plan submitted at the start of the year and complete the additional reporting questions, then submit the report by selecting the green check mark at the top of the template

. See 2024/2025 QIPP Technical Guidance Video: How to Complete A QIPP Report.

Should you require support getting started, if you experience technical difficulties, or at any stage of your Quality and Inclusive Practice Planning process please contact your local City or County Childcare Committee.

Yours sincerely

The Quality Unit
The Department of Children, Disability, Equality

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

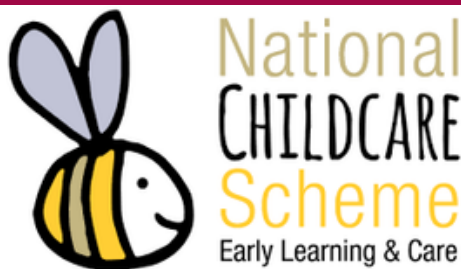
It is the responsibility of the Service Provider to ensure compliance with their contractual requirements. Service providers should ensure that they understand and adhere to the ECCE Funding Agreement. Failure to do so will result in non-compliance and will require corrective action.

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

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.