



OFFALY COUNTY CHILDCARE COMMITTEE



WEEKLY NEWS BULLETIN

10th October 2024



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



frances@offalychildcare.com



085 228 4121



www.offalychildcare.com



IMPORTANT DATES AND DEADLINES

<u>NCS Compliance Inspections – 2024/2025</u>	ON-GOING THROUGHOUT THE YEAR
NCS Weekly Returns to be completed between Monday morning and Tuesday afternoon	Weekly
<u>Communities of Professional Practice Meeting- Stand Alone School Age Service</u>	21ST OCTOBER 2024
<u>Communities of Professional Practice Meeting- Combined School Age Services</u>	22ND OCTOBER 2024
AIM Level 1 Reminder	25TH OCTOBER 2024
Core Funding Review & Confirm	1ST - 14TH NOVEMBER 2024
<u>Motivating and Managing Teams Workshop</u>	9TH NOVEMBER
<u>Well-Being Workshop for Educators</u>	9TH NOVEMBER
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Training	16TH NOVEMBER 2024 & 23RD NOVEMBER
<u>Always Children First: Child Safeguarding Awareness Training</u>	30TH NOVEMBER 2024

Minister O’Gorman publishes Better Start Quality Development Service Evaluation Report

Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, Roderic O’Gorman has today announced the publication of a report on the evaluation of the Better Start Quality Development Service.

Better Start is hosted by Pobal on behalf of the Department of Children and provides a range of supports for quality and inclusion in early learning and care settings.

The Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth commissioned the Centre for Effective Services (CES) and the Marino Institute of Education to undertake this independent evaluation.

The evaluation was commissioned to examine the Better Start Quality Development Service by assessing its impact and effectiveness from the perspective of all stakeholders, and its adaptability and sustainability over time. The aim was to offer an overarching evaluation of the initiative, highlighting its strengths, challenges, and potential learning opportunities.

The evaluation findings indicate that the Better Start Quality Development Service has a positive impact on the quality of practice in early learning and care settings. Key strengths include its strengths-based mentoring model, which leverages relationships and national frameworks to drive quality improvements and its adaptability and responsiveness to the needs of the sector over time. Early Years Specialists were found to play a crucial role in this process, providing mentoring and modelling of best practices

The evaluation made a number of recommendations, including monitoring the sustainability of outcomes in the longer term, benchmarking quality to evaluate improvements over time, targeted interventions to enhance leadership within early learning and care settings, and enhancing interagency working relationships.

Announcing the publication of the report, Minister O’Gorman said: “This evaluation shows that the Better Start Quality Development Service can enhance the quality of practice in early learning and care settings. It is based on a strengths-based mentoring model that leverages relationships, national frameworks, and service delivery attributes to improve quality of practice. Effectiveness is higher when settings are engaged, well-resourced, and receive onsite support. Barriers include staffing pressures in services.

“The evaluation has identified a number of strengths of the current Quality Development Service model, as well as some areas for improvement. My Department will now work with Pobal and Better Start to ensure the programme continues to develop and to address the recommendations made in the evaluation, with a view to further enhance the Service’s impact on quality and inclusion in settings across Ireland.

“I would like to offer my sincere thanks to those settings, educators, parents and children who supported the evaluation process through various means, including through taking part in surveys, interviews, and observations of practice.”

Minister O’Gorman welcomes strong commitment from early learning and childcare services to Core Funding for third year running

- **Over 4,200 services have now applied for a third year of Core Funding, committing to working in partnership with the State to deliver early learning and childcare for the public good.**
- **Uptake continues to increase, with applications remaining open for the scheme worth €331 million to the sector in the third programme year.**
- **A fee increase assessment process has been introduced to balance the need of parents for stability with their early learning and childcare costs and the need for providers to operate viable businesses to continue providing this public good service in their communities.**
- **Significant further investment for this year of the scheme, with increased targeted supports for sessional and small Partner Services have been introduced and further increases in year 4 of the Scheme, announced in Budget 2025, which will see the total allocation increase to over €390 million for the fourth year of the scheme.**
- **Additional supports such as sustainability funding remain available through case management.**

Roderic O’Gorman Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth today announced that over 90% of early learning and childcare services have applied for the third year of Core Funding to date.

For the third year of operation, Core Funding has increased by 15% to €331 million to ensure the benefits of Core Funding will continue to be felt by children and their families and services across the full programme year.

The 90% uptake rate is in line with previous years of Core Funding, and services can sign up to Year 3 of the scheme at any time over the course of the programme year (September 2024-August 2025). This year the scheme will continue to support increases to capacity and accessibility for parents whilst also ensuring improved quality and sustainability of Partner Services. Some of the new developments to the scheme in year 3 include higher payments to all providers and an increase in flat rate and minimum payment, benefitting smaller and sessional-only services.

In addition, there are changes to the fee management process. Up to now, services availing of Core Funding have not been allowed to raise their fees above what was charged to parents on 30 September 2021 (or at the point of first signing up for Core Funding if the service did not exist on 30 September 2021).

The fee freeze will remain in place for the majority of these services for year 3 of Core Funding, though there are two new developments.

Firstly, services whose fees have been frozen at a level that may not be sufficient to sustain their business will have the opportunity to apply for a fee increase. Secondly, a cap on fees will be introduced for services joining Core Funding for the first time in the third year. This will subsequently be extended to all services from September 2025.


Minister O’Gorman said:

“It is extremely encouraging that over 90% of services have chosen to come into partnership with the State by applying for the third year of Core Funding, and this number continues to grow.

“My Department and I will continue to engage across the sector to ensure the interests of children, their families as well as educators and practitioners are promoted, while at the same time ensuring continued sustainability for providers and supporting expanded capacity.”

Over 90% of early learning & Childcare services now signed up to Core Funding



 An Roinn Leanaí, Comhionannais,
Míchumais, Lánpháirtíochta agus Óige
Department of Children, Equality,
Disability, Integration and Youth



Do Ethos Leasa, Comhionannas, Measún, Langhóiríochta agus Oighe
Dependence on Ethics, Equality,
Flexibility, Integrity and Trust

**OFFALY
COUNTY
CHILDCARE
COMMITTEE**



Contact 085 178 3399 or
sylvia@offalychildcare.com
for more information



**COMMUNITIES OF
PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE**

Meeting

**STAND ALONE SCHOOL AGE
SERVICES**

21st October 2024

🕒 10.30AM - 12 NOON

**📍 OCCC Training Room, No. 8
O'Connor Square, Tullamore**

**Are you working in a Stand-
Alone School Aged
Childcare Service (SA SAC)
in Offaly?**

**Would you like support from
like-minded professionals?
Join our Community of
Professional Practice.**

**We are a group of SAC
Educators connected by a
shared passion, to provide
quality experiences for all
children!**

CLICK HERE TO REGISTER



Dr Eilish Lavan, Co-ordinator,
Partnership, Longford/Leitrim and Sligo
Department of Children, Equality,
Disability, Integration and Youth

**OFFALY
COUNTY
CHILDCARE
COMMITTEE**



Contact 085 178 3399 or
sylvia@offalychildcare.com
for more information



**COMMUNITIES OF
PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE**

Meeting

**SCHOOL AGE
COMBINED SERVICES**

22nd October 2024

 **7PM - 8:30PM**

 **OCCC Training Room, No. 8
O'Connor Square, Tullamore**

**Calling all Educators
working with School
Aged Children in
combined services in
Offaly?**

**Do you work with school
aged children in a shared
premises with other
children? (For example, a
full daycare, pre-school
or part-time service that
also offers school-aged
childcare)?**

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)



Motivating and Managing Teams Workshop

THIS WORKSHOP IS FOR MANAGERS OF EARLY YEARS OR SCHOOL AGED SERVICES IN OFFALY.

ANTOINETTE COFFEY WILL FACILITATE THIS INTERACTIVE WORKSHOP WHICH WILL SPARK REAL CONVERSATIONS AND SHIFTS IN MINDSET.



Date: 9th November
Time: 10am - 12 noon
Cost: €5 per person

Venue:
OCCC Training room,
No. 8 O'Connor Square
Tullamore

[**CLICK HERE TO REGISTER**](#)

OFFALY COUNTY CHILDCARE COMMITTEE



WELL-BEING WORKSHOP FOR EDUCATORS

**DO YOU WORK IN AN EARLY YEARS OR
SCHOOL AGED CHILDCARE SERVICE?**

JOIN US FOR AN INTERACTIVE WORKSHOP
WITH ANTOINETTE COFFEY WHERE YOU

DO YOU NEED A BREAK?
WOULD YOU LIKE SOME
SUPPORT TO DEAL WITH THE
DAILY DEMANDS OF YOUR
PROFESSION?

WILL BE EQUIPPED WITH PRACTICAL
TOOLS TO MANAGE STRESS

BUILD RESILIENCE. SHIFT FROM A NEGATIVE
MINDSET TO AN EMPOWERED MINDSET

AND FIND JOY AND PRIDE IN WORKING WITH
CHILDREN AGAIN.

**DATE: 9TH NOVEMBER
TIME: 2PM - 4PM
COST: €5 PER PERSON
WHERE: OCCC TRAINING ROOM**



[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)



Offaly County Childcare Committee
057 9135878

DIVERSITY, EQUALITY AND INCLUSION CHARTER AND GUIDELINES FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION

DIVERSITY EQUALITY & INCLUSION TRAINING



Topics

- The National Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Charter
- Understanding Diversity, Equality and Inclusion
- Developing an anti-bias approach in early years
- The physical environment and its role in inclusive practice



Saturday 16th November:
9.30am - 4.30pm



Saturday 23rd November:
9.30am - 4.30pm



Offaly CCC Training
Room,
O'Connor Square
Tullamore



€10 for training course

[REGISTER NOW](#)



An Roinn Leanaí, Comhionannas,
Máthartha, Langhábhartha agus Dúgá
Department of Children, Equality,
Disability, Integration and Youth



[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)

National Síolta Aistear Initiative



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland



Forbairt Gáiríoch
Léimhíochtá Náisiúnta
National Early Years
Quality Development

Siolta Awareness Raising Workshops Part 1

- 20th November 2024
- 2pm - 5pm
- OCCC Training room,
O'Connor Square,
Tullamore

This introductory level workshop is suitable for educators who want to increase their understanding, knowledge and implementation of the following Síolta standards.

- Standard 1: Rights of the Child
- Standard 3: Parents & Families
- Standard 4: Consultation
- Standard 5: Interactions
- Standard 14: Identity & Belonging

Expected Learning Outcomes:

- Understand the structure of Síolta principles, standards and components and how they connect with Aistear principles.
- Understand and explain the value of Síolta standards
- Understand the evidence base and policy links of standards.
- Engage and reflect individually and with peers in professional dialogue focused on implementation of Síolta standards
- Consider how you are currently implementing Síolta standards and how these standards might be applied further in practice



057 9135878



sylvia@offalychildcare.com



No 8 O'Connor Square,
Tullamore, Co. Offaly

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)

National *Síolta* *Aistear* Initiative



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland



Forbairt Cáilíocht
Lúthshóisleata Náisiúnta
National Early Years
Quality Development

Síolta Awareness Raising Workshops Part 2

- **27th November 2024**
- **2pm - 5pm**
- **OCCC Training room,
O'Connor Square,
Tullamore**

This introductory level workshop is suitable for educators who want to increase their understanding, knowledge and implementation of the following *Síolta* standards.

Standard 2: Environments

Standard 6: Play

Standard 7: Curriculum

Standard 13: Transitions

Standard 16: Community Involvement

Expected Learning Outcomes:

- Understand the structure of *Síolta* principles, standards and components and how they connect with *Aistear* principles.
- Understand and explain the value of *Síolta* standards
- Understand the evidence base and policy links of standards.
- Engage and reflect individually and with peers in professional dialogue focused on implementation of *Síolta* standards
- Consider how you are currently implementing *Síolta* standards and how these standards might be applied further in practice



057 9135878



sylvia@offalychildcare.com



No 8 O'Connor Square,
Tullamore, Co. Offaly

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)

Hive Notifications

AIM Plus and AIM Non-term Applications

Dear Service Provider,

We have received a large volume of AIM plus and/or AIM non-term applications and are processing them as quickly as possible.

Please note, it may take up to 12 weeks to process an AIM plus or AIM non-term application, however all applications **submitted** by close of business on **Friday 25 October** will be eligible for backdating of funding. Any applications which are **submitted** by **25 October 2024**, once approved, will be backdated to the latest date of the following:

- The AIM standard funding start date.
- The date AIM plus or AIM non term support commences (employment of additional employee).
- The date the NCS confirmed claim commences.

Important Information

At present, it is not possible to submit a review for AIM Plus or AIM Non-term applications. Once this functionality becomes available on Early Years Hive, a further announcement will be issued.

Please monitor your AIM applications on the Early Years Hive, as they may have been referred back to you for amendments to be actioned.

Regards

The Early Years Team

Hive Notifications

Changes to the Quality Action Plan for Core Funding Year 3

Dear Service Provider,

Core Funding supports Partner Services with their financial sustainability while enhancing the quality, affordability, and accessibility of their services. In accordance with Partnership for the Public Good, (DCEDIY 2021) the Core Funding model commits to drive high-quality service provision. To support this, Core Funding requires all early learning and care (ELC), school-age childcare (SAC) and childminding services that benefit from Core Funding to complete a Quality Action Plan, using tools provided by the Department and their agents.

In 2024, the Equal Start model, the fourth element of Together for Better, was introduced, to provide additional supports to ELC and SAC services where there are high proportions of children who are at risk of poverty to mitigate the impacts of early disadvantage. To support this, Equal Start requires ELC, SAC and childminding services that benefit from the Equal Start Model to complete a Tackling Disadvantage Plan, using tools provided by the Department and their agents.

Diversity, equality, and inclusion are fundamental characteristics of quality early learning and care and school age-childcare provision. In recognising this, and in an effort to minimise the administrative ask of Partner Services, the contractually required Tackling Disadvantage Plan and the Quality Action Plan have been amalgamated into a single Quality and Inclusive Practice Plan (QIPP).

Hive Notifications

The QIPP will be permanently housed on the Core Funding Contractual Requirements Reporting System and will no longer need to be uploaded to the Early Years Hive for validation. End-of-year reporting requirements have been minimised and can now be completed throughout the year, as Partner Services progress their identified quality and inclusion actions.

While the updated process closely resembles that of Year 1 and 2, a guidance document outlining the changes will be issued to all partner services by Wednesday 16 October.

Access to the QIPP template on the Core Funding Contractual Requirements Reporting System will commence from Wednesday 13 November.

Partner Services are requested to complete their Quality and Inclusive Practice Plan by Monday 16 December.

Should you have any queries please contact your local City or County Childcare Committee for support (www.myccc.ie).

Regards,
The Early Years Team

Hive Notifications

ECCE compliance

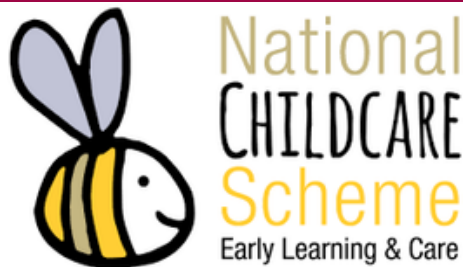
It is the responsibility of the Service Provider to ensure compliance with their contractual requirements. Service providers should ensure that they understand and adhere to the ECCE Funding Agreement. Failure to do so will result in non-compliance and will require corrective action.

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.