



# OFFALY COUNTY CHILDCARE COMMITTEE



## WEEKLY NEWS BULLETIN

24th 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



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# IMPORTANT DATES AND DEADLINES

<b><u>NCS Compliance Inspections – 2024/2025</u></b>	<b>ON-GOING THROUGHOUT THE YEAR</b>
<b>NCS Weekly Returns to be completed between Monday morning and Tuesday afternoon</b>	<b>Weekly</b>
<b>AIM Level 1 Reminder</b>	<b>25TH OCTOBER 2024</b>
<b>Core Funding Review &amp; Confirm</b>	<b>1ST - 14TH NOVEMBER 2024</b>
<b><u>Motivating and Managing Teams Workshop</u></b>	<b>9TH NOVEMBER</b>
<b><u>Well-Being Workshop for Educators</u></b>	<b>9TH NOVEMBER</b>
<b>Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Training</b>	<b>16TH NOVEMBER 2024 &amp; 23RD NOVEMBER</b>
<b><u>Always Children First: Child Safeguarding Awareness Training</u></b>	<b>30TH NOVEMBER 2024</b>

## **Government's free pre-school programme ECCE reaches the one million milestone as results of independent review is published**

New figures show how the government's free pre-school programme - the Early Childhood Care and Education or ECCE programme - has transformed early learning experiences and development opportunities for young children in this country, according to the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, Roderic O'Gorman.

The pre-school programme provides young children with their first formal experience of early learning prior to commencing primary school. When introduced in 2010, children could for one year of free pre-school, which was delivered over 38 weeks of the year in line with the school year – September-June. Since 2018, children can qualify for two years of pre-school, without charge to parents.

With over million children – or a fifth of the population – enrolled in the programme since it was first introduced, uptake rates in excess of 96%, State investment topping €3 billion and barriers faced by children in accessing the programme removed through additional supports provided through the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) and Equal Start, the Minister says the programme has provided important learning and development opportunities to all young children, in particular children with a disability and children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The programme has also been behind a dramatic shift in school starting age, with the proportion of four-year-olds in junior infants down to 16% in 2023/24 from 40% in 2009/10 and has been a key impetus for professionalising the sector.

Prior to the introduction of the ECCE Programme, there was no minimum qualification for staff working in the sector. Today, the minimum qualification for staff delivering the programme is NFQ Level 5 for Educators and NFQ Level 6 for Lead Educators. Work now underway to introduce a statutory entitlement to the programme will build on this strong foundation, according to Minister O’Gorman and will be informed by the findings from an Independent Review of the Early Childhood Education and Care (ECCE) Programme, conducted by Stranmillis University College, Belfast, which the Minister also published today.

Welcoming these latest figures and the findings from the Review, Minister O’Gorman said:

**“These figures I have released today and the findings from the review by Stranmillis University College show the success story the ECCE programme has become.**

**“With more than 1 million enrolments since the programme was first introduced and uptake rates in excess of 96%, it is clear this programme has been embraced wholeheartedly by children and their families and by wider society.**

**“Moreover, with 40% of families reporting that they would not have been able to enrol their child in pre-school had it not been for the ECCE programme, it is clear that this programme has altered early learning experiences and development opportunities for all children and children experiencing disadvantage in particular.**

**“I am grateful to providers and early years educator across the country who are behind these figures and this success, and I wish to acknowledge their crucial role in transforming children’s lives through education and care.**

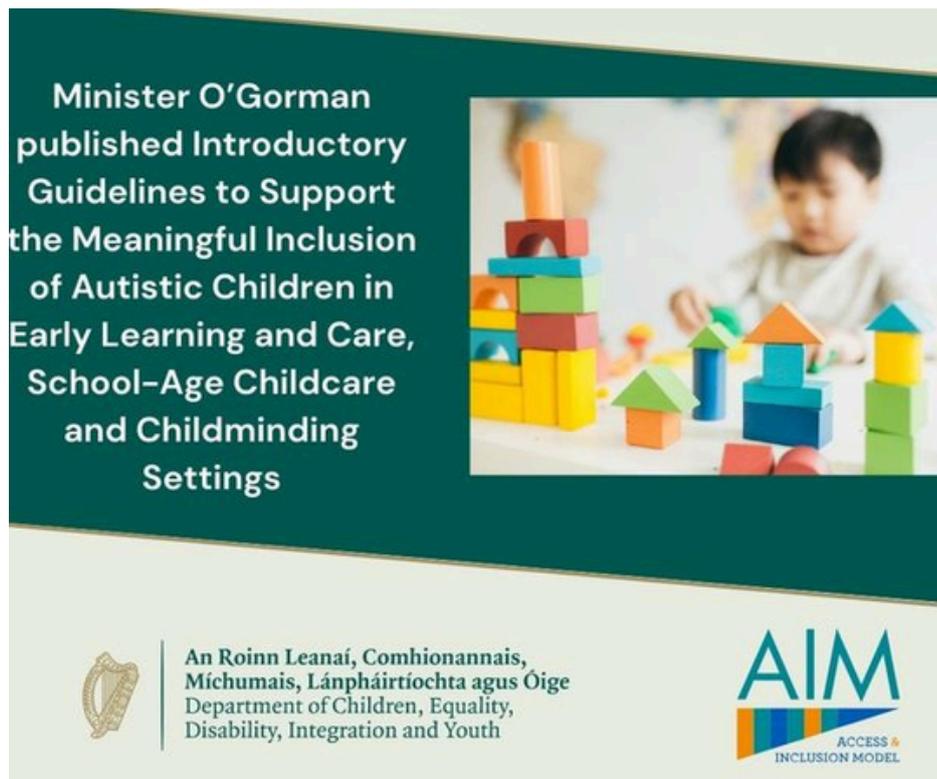
**“Work to introduce a statutory entitlement to the ECCE programme is now underway, which will build on this strong foundation. This work will be informed by the findings from the Independent Review of the ECCE programme, which I published today.”**

Minister O’Gorman published Introductory Guidelines to Support the Inclusion of Autistic Children in Early Learning and Care, School-Age Childcare and Childminding Settings.

The Guidelines are for early years educators, school-age childcare practitioners and childminders who are currently working to support the meaningful inclusion of autistic children in early learning and care, school-age childcare and childminding settings. The Guidelines fulfil a commitment in the recently launched National Autism Innovation Strategy, which aims to address the bespoke challenges and barriers facing autistic people and to improve understanding and accommodation of autism within society and across the public system.

Each year 2,735 services benefit from AIM supports, which provides supports to ensure children with a disability can access and participate in the ECCE pre-school programme and early learning and care more broadly.

Full press release here; <https://brnw.ch/2D421F>



**Minister O’Gorman  
published Introductory  
Guidelines to Support  
the Meaningful Inclusion  
of Autistic Children in  
Early Learning and Care,  
School-Age Childcare  
and Childminding  
Settings**

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

**AIM**  
ACCESS &  
INCLUSION MODEL



# 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](#)

# Hive Notifications

## **ECCE minimum numbers exemption**

Dear Service Provider,

The Department would like to remind services that, as per the rules governing the ECCE programme, there must be a minimum daily enrolment of 8 eligible children in ECCE preschool room sessions.

If your ECCE preschool room session does not comply with this requirement, you may apply for a minimum number exemption through your local CCC under the criteria set out in the application form. The ECCE rules along with the minimum number exemption application form can be found on the [ECCE Documents](#) page of the Early Years Hive.

Funding may be withheld where the minimum numbers are not met, and an application has not been submitted for an exemption to this rule.

Regards,  
The Early Years Team

# Hive Notifications

## Reminder to submit AIM Level 1 applications for new and existing graduates of LINC

Dear Service Provider,

Reminder: The AIM Level 1 application process for **all qualified LINC graduates** remains open on the Early Years Hive.

AIM Level 1 is an annual application for services with new and existing graduates of the LINC programme. All applicants are encouraged to submit their application as soon as possible.

Applications received by **5pm on Thursday 24 October 2024** will be awarded the additional capitation from the Inclusion Co-ordinator's employment start date relevant to the 2024/2025 programme year. **Any applications received after this date will not be backdated.**

Applications must be submitted electronically via the Early Years Hive portal. Applicant guidelines can be found **here**.

Should you have any queries in relation to the AIM Level 1 application process, please contact the Early Years Provider Centre by raising a Request using the following categories:

- Programme: AIM Level 1
- Request type: Application
- Request type detail: How To

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.