



OFFALY COUNTY CHILDCARE COMMITTEE



WEEKLY NEWS BULLETIN

3rd October 2024



*Important
dates*

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>Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Training</u>	16TH NOVEMBER 2024 & 23RD NOVEMBER
<u>Always Children First: Child Safeguarding Awareness Training</u>	30TH NOVEMBER 2024

35,000 children experiencing disadvantage to benefit from funding boost for early learning and childcare settings

- **621 early learning and childcare settings have accepted the Equal Start priority designation to date.**
- **These settings been objectively identified as operating in the context of the highest levels of concentrated disadvantage.**
- **More settings expected to accept the Equal Start Priority Designation in the coming weeks.**

Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, Roderic O’Gorman has today published the first group of early learning and childcare settings to receive a funding boost through the Equal Start scheme.

Equal Start, launched earlier this year, is a new, DEIS-style funding model. It provides a set of universal and targeted measures to support access to, and full participation in, early learning and childcare for children and their families who experience disadvantage.

The services announced today have been objectively identified as operating in the context of the highest levels of concentrated disadvantage and given ‘priority designation’ under Equal Start, meaning they are now in line to receive additional State funding and supports under Equal Start from this month.

In the first year of Equal Start, settings with a priority designation will receive funding for additional staff hours that can be used to support engagement between the settings and families, engagement between the settings and other child and family support services, training in inclusive practices and to support other educators and practitioners in the provision of early learning and childcare to children with higher levels of need.

To date:

- 246 Tier 1 settings serving 11,000 children are benefitting from additional funding to support a 15% increase of staffing hours; and
- 375 Tier 2 settings serving 18,000 children are benefitting from additional funding to support an 8% increase of staffing hours

More settings are expected to accept the Equal Start Priority Designation in the coming weeks.

For year 1, some €11 million has been allocated by the Minister for additional staff hours, with an additional €2.5 million allocated towards the delivery of other Equal Start supports – both universal (for all early learning and childcare settings) and targeted (for Equal Start priority cohorts and settings).

Other supports include:

- Full roll out of the Traveller Parenting Support Programme to all 17 Tusla areas, with new responsibilities on Family Link Workers to engage with Traveller parents of children aged 1-5 years, supporting them to attend and participate in early learning and childcare, avail of the ECCE programme and where applicable applying for the NCS.
- Appointment of Traveller and Roma Advisory Specialists to work in Better Start which is hosted in Pobal to promote and enhance inclusive high-quality early learning and childcare.
- Review and updating of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Guidelines and associated training.
- Review of the current Inclusion Co-ordinator role and updating of Leadership for Inclusion Programme.
- Development of a new Family Community Liaison role and development and rollout of associated training programme.
- Roll-out of Early Talk Boost to Equal Start target settings.
- Roll-out of Meitheal training and engagement by early years educators and school-age childcare practitioners in Meitheal.
- Development and roll out of Communications and Engagement Plan.
- Development of a new strand of funding under the existing Case Management Process for critical incidents.
- Roll-out Equal Start literacy and numeracy initiatives under the National Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Literacy Strategy.

Equal Start will be fully rolled out in three phases over a five-year period, 2024-2028.

Commenting on today's announcement, Minister O'Gorman said:

"I am delighted to announce the first group of early learning and childcare settings that have accepted Equal Start priority designation.

"These settings been objectively identified as operating in the context of the highest levels of concentrated disadvantage and are playing a vital role in mitigating the impacts of early disadvantage on the development and life chances of children in their care.

"I am delighted, through Equal Start, to support these settings with their vital work with 35000 children and their families throughout the country."

Speaking about the importance of Equal Start, Corduff Childcare Services, Dublin 15 Manager Noeleen Keating said:

"Accepting an Equal Start Priority Designation is very important to us as it means that we will be able to improve the quality of the service we are providing. We have children with higher levels of need in every room in our service, so we have higher ratios of staff to children required.

"Families in our community are really going to benefit from this additional funding and support as it will allow us to look after the early learning and childcare needs of young children in our community and give their parents the opportunity to get back into work or education."



Do Eolas Leasa, Comhábhannas,
Mheasraí, Langhábhannas agus Oig
Eaglaise ar Líonra, Eadailt,
Dúshliog, Inneamhar agus Teach

**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



De Roinn Léinn, Comhaltasanna,
Mártaimín, Leabharlanna agus Oig
Threasa, Taispeánas agus Teach

**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](#)



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](#)



[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)

Children First



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

Date:

- Saturday 30th November 2024

Venue:

- O'Connor Square, Tullamore, Co. Offaly, R35 PD61

Time:

- 9.30am - 4.00pm

Register Now on Eventbrite



www.offalychildcare.com

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)

Hive Notifications

AIM Plus payments

Dear Service Provider,

The first AIM Plus payments will be processed week commencing 30 September for applications which are at Approved (Level 7 capitation allocated) or Approved (existing Level 7 capitation in place).

Applications which were 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 support commenced (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. A further announcement will be issued once reviews are available on the Early Years Hive for AIM Plus and AIM Non-term applications.

Help & Support

Should you have any queries in relation to the AIM programme, please contact the Early Years Provider Centre (EYPC) by raising a Request on the Early Years Hive using the following categories:

- Programme: AIM Level 7
- Request type: (select relevant option)
- Request type detail: (select relevant option)

Regards,
The Early Years Team

Hive Notifications

AIM Level 1 - Reminder for services to submit AIM Level 1 Applications for services with 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 2024/25 programme year. **Any applications received after this date will not be backdated.**

Applications must be submitted electronically via the Early Years Hive. 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 on the Hive using the following categories:

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

Regards,
The Early Years Team

Hive Notifications

ECCE Calendar - Week 20

Dear Service Provider,

In order to facilitate the 2024/2025 ECCE calendar submission, service providers can now mark week 20 of their calendar as 'Payable' or 'Non payable' by manually ticking the box under the 'Non-Payable Week' column. You must open at least one day that week to use this functionality. This already exists for week one.

Please be advised, for the 2024/25 Programme call, ECCE services are only permitted to make calendar adjustments to days in the future. Days in the past are not able to be changed retrospectively.

Regards,
The Early Years Team

Core Funding year 3 (2024/25) financial reporting requirements

Dear Service Provider,

The financial management tool and associated documentation is now available for download on the [Core Funding Documents](#) page of the Early Years Hive for services who find it useful and wish to use it.

Please contact your local City/County Childcare Committee (CCC) with queries relating to Core Funding financial reporting requirements. CCC contact details are available on www.myccc.ie

Regards,
The Early Years Team

Hive Notifications

ECCE compliance

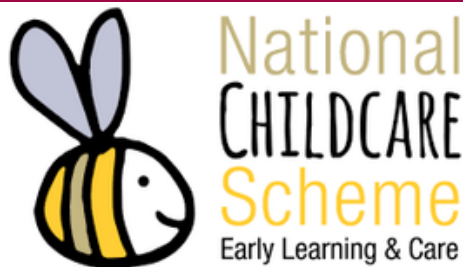
It is the responsibility of the Service Provider to ensure compliance with their contractual requirements. Service providers should ensure that they understand and adhere to the ECCE Funding Agreement. Failure to do so will result in non-compliance and will require corrective action.

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.