



# OFFALY COUNTY CHILDCARE COMMITTEE



## WEEKLY NEWS BULLETIN

13th January 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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# 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>Review functionality for AIM Plus and/or AIM Non-term applications</b>	<b>24th January 2025</b>
<b>Building Blocks Extension Grant Scheme application</b>	<b>Closes at 12pm on 27th January 2025</b>
<b>Community of Professional Practice for Stand alone School Age Services</b>	<b>27th January 2025</b>
<b>Community of Professional Practice Early Learning and Care Services</b>	<b>4th February 2025</b>
<b><u>Always Children First: Child Safeguarding Awareness Training</u></b>	<b>15th February 2025</b>
<b>Save the Date: Offaly CCC Seminar 2025</b>	<b>29th March 2025</b>



**YOUR Early Yearshive SNAPSHOT**  
13 January 2025



Upcoming task	Who should do it?	What do I need to do?	When do I need to do it?
National Childcare Scheme (NCS) Returns.	Services offering NCS 2024/2025.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete weekly attendance returns for the previous week on the <a href="#">returns</a> page.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6-12 January returns due by Tuesday 14 January 2025.</li> <li>13-19 January returns due by Tuesday 21 January 2025.</li> </ul>
Review functionality for AIM Plus and/or AIM Non-term applications.	Services with AIM Plus and/or AIM Non-term applications.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Guidance on how to submit AIM reviews can be found <a href="#">here</a>.</li> </ul>	Reviews for AIM Plus or AIM Non-Term submitted by 24 January 2025 will be eligible for backdated funding.
Building Blocks Extension Grant Scheme application now open.	Core Funding Partner Services for 2024/2025 who wish to avail of the grant and are eligible to apply.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High-level information on the scheme can be found <a href="#">here</a>.</li> <li>Detailed application templates and applicant guidelines and supports are available <a href="#">here</a>.</li> </ul>	The application closes at 12pm on 27 January 2025.
<p>The above tasks are for general guidance only. You may have additional tasks outstanding. Please check the announcements page and notifications page of the Early Years Hive regularly.</p>			

You may have missed	Who is it relevant to?	Where can I find it?
Force Majeure application form.	Services who are required to submit a Force Majeure application in the event of a service closure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You can find the Force Majeure application form <a href="#">here</a>.</li> <li>Submit your application on the <a href="#">requests</a> page.</li> </ul>
Updated Financial Management Tool (FMT) for Core Funding 2024/2025.	Core Funding Partner Services for 2024/2025 who may not have their own accountancy software packages.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You can find the FMT <a href="#">here</a>.</li> <li>Contact your local City or County Childcare Committee for further support.</li> </ul>

Minister Roderic O'Gorman TD has welcomed the Maternity Protection Employment Equality and Preservation of Certain Records Bill 2024 passing all Stages in the Oireachtas.

The legislation will allow an employee who receives a diagnosis of a serious illness to postpone maternity leave until treatment is concluded, and follows the 'Leave Our Leave' campaign by the Irish Cancer Society.

The maternity leave can be postponed for between 5 and 52 weeks, on certification from their doctor.

Postponing maternity leave will not sacrifice other forms of leave, such as unpaid maternity leave and Parents Leave.

## Maternity Protection, Employment Equality and Preservation of Certain Records Bill 2024 passed by the Oireachtas



<https://brnw.ch/21wO4mX>

## **Minister announces opening of €25 million capital funding scheme to deliver thousands of early learning and childcare places**

- Building Blocks Extension Grant Scheme to open for applications before year-end
- grants for community and private early learning and childcare services to increase their capacity by means of large-scale extensions
- funding to also be made available for community services to purchase or construct new premises

Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, Roderic O’Gorman has today announced the launch of the €25 million Building Blocks Extension Grant scheme for early learning and childcare providers.

The Building Blocks Extension Scheme will deliver additional capacity by supporting existing early learning and childcare Core Funding partner services to extend their premises. It will also allow community services to purchase or construct new premises.

The scheme will have four strands:

- extensions to existing premises for private services
- extensions to existing premises for community services
- purchase of new premises for community services
- construction of new premises for community services

All projects will be required to deliver net increases in full-time places for one to three-year-olds. Projects will also be required to incorporate Universal Design.

The Extension Grant scheme follows on from the Building Blocks Expansion Grant scheme which ran earlier this year and the Building Blocks Improvement Grant Scheme which operated last year.

The Building Blocks Extension Grant Scheme is part of the wider Building Blocks Capital Programme for Early Learning and Childcare under the revised National Development Plan 2021-2030 (NDP). Up to €89 million has been allocated between 2023 and 2026.

Making the announcement today, Minister O’Gorman said:  
“I am very pleased to formally launch this scheme. It demonstrates further significant commitment to the development of the sector and investment in the expansion of provision. The scheme is great news for children, their parents and providers. It will deliver a welcome increase in places, particularly for young children.

“The Building Blocks Extension Grant Scheme will result in thousands of additional, affordable early learning and childcare places coming on stream. In particular, it is a huge boost for the community sector, and funding will be prioritised for applications from areas with the greatest supply needs.”

He added: “This scheme builds on the very significant successes in recent years in expanding the delivery of improved and more affordable early learning and childcare.”

The Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth continues to progress a range of other actions to increase the supply of quality and affordable early learning and childcare including significantly increased investment in the Core Funding scheme and the National Childcare Scheme in 2025 and the introduction of the regulation of childminders since September.

**Minister O’Gorman announces opening of €25m capital funding scheme to deliver thousands of additional early learning and childcare places**



# SAVE



# OFFALY CCC SEMINAR

# 29TH MARCH 2025

# THE

# DATE



BRIDGE  
HOUSE  
HOTEL,  
TULLAMORE

9.30am - 4.00pm



OFFALY  
COUNTY  
CHILDCARE  
COMMITTEE



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



COMMUNITIES OF  
PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE  
*Meeting*  
STAND ALONE SCHOOL AGE  
SERVICES  
27th January 2025

 7.00PM - 9.00PM  
 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**





OFFALY  
COUNTY  
CHILDCARE  
COMMITTEE



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



COMMUNITIES OF  
PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

# Meeting

## ELC SERVICES

(FULLDAY CARE/PART-TIME/SESSIONAL)

4th February 2025

 7.00PM - 9.00PM

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

Calling all Educators working  
in Early Learning and Care  
services in Offaly?

Benefits of joining our community of  
professional practice

- Help with everyday challenges
- Gain confidence
- Fun with colleagues
- Meaningful Participation
- Sense of belonging
- Networking opportunities
- Enhanced communication skills
- Develop personally and professionally
- Expand skills and expertise

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)

# Pre-Registration Training for Childminders



The Pre-Registration Training is mandatory training for childminders and is the first step in registering with Tusla.

It will give you all the information you need to be a childminder, understand the new Childminding Regulations and documents required to register with Tusla.

This training:

- takes approximately 6 - 7 hours and is FREE
- will be delivered either online or in person
- has no assessment
- will provide you with a certificate of completion
- is available via **Offaly County Childcare Committee**

**Saturday 8th February 2025- In Person @Offaly CCC**

**Time: 9.30am-5.00pm**

**Offaly County Childcare Committee CLG.  
8 O'Connor Square, Tullamore, Co. Offaly.**

**Contact Gillian : 085-1703772**

**[gillian@offalychildcare.com](mailto:gillian@offalychildcare.com)**



**National Action Plan  
for Childminding  
2021-2028**

**Childcare  
Committees  
Ireland**



**An Rann Leasú, Comhionannais,  
Mheánaíocht, Líonpháirtíochta agus Oige  
Department of Children, Equality,  
Disability, Integration and Youth**

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

# Children First

**ALWAYS  
CHILDREN FIRST:  
CHILD  
SAFEGUARDING  
AWARENESS  
TRAINING**



**Register Now on Eventbrite**

**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 15th February 2025**

**Venue:**

- **O'Connor Square, Tullamore,  
Co. Offaly, R35 Y7P0**

**Time:**

- **9.30am - 4.30pm**

**NATIONAL CHILD  
SAFEGUARDING  
PROGRAMME**

for Early Learning &  
Childcare Services



An Boinn Leasú, Comhionannais,  
Míchumais, Luchtáiríochta agus Oige  
Department of Children, Equality,  
Disability, Integration and Youth



[www.offalychildcare.com](http://www.offalychildcare.com)  
057 9135878

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

# Hive Notifications

## ECCE compliance

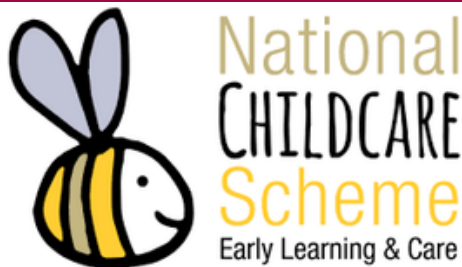
It is the responsibility of the Service Provider to ensure compliance with their contractual requirements. Service providers should ensure that they understand and adhere to the ECCE Funding Agreement. Failure to do so will result in non-compliance and will require corrective action.

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.