



Newsletter

Fingal County Childcare Committee

December 2020

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Dear Early Years & School Age Childcare Services,

We hope that you, your family, and staff are keeping well. All FCCC staff are available via phone & email (Please see below).

- **Colette Redmond, Office Administrator**
Ph: 087- 7844805 or email colette@fingalcountychildcare.ie
- **Gina Daly, Programme Information Officer**
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- **Mairead Tucker, Lead Development Officer Swords and Surrounding Areas**
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- **Helen Campbell, Finance & Office Manager**
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PIP Announcements

2021 Capital Programme – 3rd December

The funding available for the 2021 Capital Programme is €8.3million. As you will be aware, the distribution of capital funding is determined on an annual basis, having regard to the needs of children, families and service providers, and Departmental priorities. The priority for the 2021 Capital Programme will be a fire safety capital grant.

Tulsa, the independent regulator of the sector, requires that providers submit a fire safety certificate as part of the statutory registration process. The Department is aware that while many services have already re-registered and submitted a fire safety certificate, some have re-registered subject to submitting an up to date Fire Safety Certificate in 2021. Some of these services may need to carry out remedial works to receive a Fire Safety Certificate. In recognition of the potential costs of remedial works, the Department will provide capital grants of between €1,000 and €10,000 to contribute to these costs under the 2021 Capital Programme.

Works which will be eligible for funding under the 2021 Capital Programme will include the following:

- Fire safety fit out costs, for example, installing fire alarm systems and fire protection measures such as escape routes; lighting, fire doors, fire proofing specific walls and floors; and escape stairways, with windows as secondary escape option;
- Fire safety equipment including smoke alarms, CO2 alarms, fire extinguishers, fire blankets; and
- Fire safety maintenance and replacement of key “fire risk appliances” such as electrical wiring and gas boilers.

To be eligible for funding, works must be identified as being required in a fire safety assessment report which has been completed since June 2019 by a competent person who is a registered architect, building surveyor or engineer. The fire safety assessment must be provided with the application for funding.

Pobal will administer the 2021 Capital Programme and will open an on-line application process in mid to late January, with a closing date in mid-February. Pobal will provide more information on the Programme in the coming weeks.

If you do not have a Fire Safety Certificate and intend to apply for a grant under the 2021 Capital Programme, please ensure that you have a fire safety assessment to support your application, by early February. The fire safety assessment may be dated at any time after 1 June 2019 - although, if material works have been carried out in your service since the fire safety assessment was obtained, you will have to provide an updated assessment.

If any of the €8.3million available for capital grants for early learning and care and school age services is not drawn down for fire safety works, the Department will distribute the balance by way of a second round of grants, which will focus on outdoor play. Further detail on this will be announced in early April 2021.

- **EYPC and Parent Support Centre Christmas and New Year’s Operating Hours- 4th December**

Dear Service Provider,

Details of the Early Years Provider Centre and Parent Support Centre operating hours for Christmas and New Years can be found at the following links:

- EYPC <https://earlyyearshive.ncs.gov.ie/contact-us/>
- Parent Support Centre <https://www.ncs.gov.ie/en/contact-us/>

The reduced operating hours will take effect from the week beginning Monday, 21st December. Normal operating hours will resume from Monday, 4th January.

Many thanks,
Early Years Team

- **IMPORTANT: ECCE Payment Schedule 2020/21 update – 15th December**

Dear Service Provider,

The [ECCE 2020/2021 Payment Schedule](#) has now been updated and the following changes should be noted:

- the 'pay until' date for the payment of the 20/11/2020 has been changed from 25/12/2020 to 01/01/2021
- the date the funding will be in the Service Providers bank in the first week of January is now Wednesday 06/01/2021

Early Years Team

- **Christmas and New Year Payment Dates – 15th December**

Dear Service Provider,

Please see the below payment dates for early year's programmes over the Christmas and New Year's weeks:

Date	Programme
18 December 2020	NCS, CCSP, AIM L5
24 December 2020	NCS
31 December 2020	NCS, TEC
06 January 2021	ECCE
08 January 2021	NCS, CCSP, TEC, AIM, L7

Many thanks,
Early Years Team

- **Extended 2 Hour Attendance Rule for NCS – 16th December**

Dear Service Provider,

Under the stimulus package announced in July, the Department introduced added flexibility on attendance rules under NCS. This change allows for 2 hours variation in attendance against registration per week without triggering a report. For non NCS, a 30 minute variance tolerance per day per child is allowed. These temporary measures were introduced in response to the exceptional environment caused by COVID-19.

This measure has been **extended** and will now last until 31st March 2021.

You can find links to Attendance Trackers to support your attendance keeping for NCS on the [Attendance Rules](#) page of the Early Years Hive. This page also contains the rules around child absence and under attendance under the scheme for your benefit.

Early Years Team

- **AIM Level 7 – Second Year Extensions and Increase in Capitation Rates – 16th December**

Dear Service Provider,

Please see the below important updates for AIM Level 7.

Second Year Extensions

The application process for second year extensions for AIM Level 7 (2020 Programme) will close on the PIP system at 1pm on Friday, 18th December.

After this date, if you wish to apply for AIM Level 7 support for a child who has previously been in receipt of Level 7 in your service, please contact your Early Years Specialist.

Increase in capitation rates

From Monday, 4th January 2020, the AIM Level 7 capitation rate will increase from €195 per week to €210 per week.

Further details of this increase can be found [here](#).

- **NCS end-of-year maintenance announcement – 18th December**

Dear Service Provider,

As it is coming up to the Christmas holidays and the end of 2020, it may be necessary to make important changes on your Early Years Hive portal for NCS.

As such, the following points are covered in this announcement:

NCS Service Calendars (adding closures)

Non-term hours

Bridging payments

The ending of 52-week CHICKs/awards

NCS end-of-year webinar (recording)

We advise making any necessary changes as soon as possible to ensure payments under NCS are not affected.

Many thanks,

Early Years Team

NCS Service Calendar

If your service is closed over the Christmas and New Year's period, you must mark the closures on your NCS service calendar on the Hive accordingly. You must also note whether it is a subsidised (paid) closure or not. Services are entitled to up to 10 subsidized closures per programme year.

For guidance on adding closures to your NCS service calendar, please see the 'Adding closures' heading of the Service Calendar section on the Hive.

Note: If your closure is a paid closure, you must add each day of the closure individually, as there is no option on the Hive portal to mark the closure as paid if you enter it as a period, the option is present when adding single days.

Non-Term Hours

Non-Term hours can be used to cover the Christmas period for childcare needs when schools are closed. To add Non-Term hours to NCS claims, log into the Hive and follow the below steps:

Click the “Registrations” button at the top of the screen, then “NCS Registrations”.

Find the child you’re looking for (if you don’t see them in the list initially, they may be under the “Past” section if it’s an old registration or their registration is incomplete) and click on their name, or click the yellow arrow to the right and select “View” (Both methods do the same thing).

This page shows all current and past claims for this child. Locate the current one (look at the “Claim start date” and “Claim end date” – by default the newest one is on the bottom) and click the yellow arrow beside it, then click “View/Edit weeks”.

Next you will see a list of all of the weeks in this claim, using the dates shown on the left, find the weeks the child will attend the additional hours and highlight them in yellow by clicking anywhere on them and select “Bulk Edit”.

Leave the “Claimed hours” box blank, as leaving it blank will tell the system to keep the current value and not change anything, and add the additional hours you need to claim for under the “Non-term hours” box.

Click “Apply”, then “Yes” when asked if you wish to confirm this change. The screen will load for a few moments to apply your changes.

Confirm the new value you have entered is present on the weeks in question, then scroll to the bottom of the page and hit “Submit” to save the changes you’ve made.

For more information on NCS registrations, please see the Registrations section of Resources on the Hive. There is also a Quick Guide on Adding Non-Term Hours available and a number of videos available on our YouTube channel to offer step-by-step guides.

Remember: if you are using the attendance tracker available on the Hive, for non-term weeks you will need to enter a child’s non-term hours into the ‘NCS hours claimed’ column. This will ensure that the tracker will generate alerts correctly against their attendance. You will need to revert to their term hours when term resumes.

Important: Changes cannot be made to service calendar opening hours or claim hours once a return for that week has been submitted on the Early Years Hive.

Bridging payments

Bridging payments are made available to services to avail of on the Early Years Hive when submitting a return. Two weeks in advance, the system recognizes when a service has a subsidized closure coming up and asks the following: “You have an upcoming closure, do you want to request a Bridging Payment for the dates from “X” to “Z”? (Yes/No)”

This is paid during the week the service is closed i.e. unable to submit their returns. Service must then submit “Fast returns” for this period when they return after the closure.

Ending and re-registering 52-week CHICKs/awards

Most CHICKs/awards last for 52 weeks and many of these will have ended or be ending over the coming weeks. To ensure that payment under NCS is not affected as a result of an expired CHICK, you are encouraged to contact the parents of any children with awards ending soon to discuss their continued

childcare needs. In this case, parents will receive a notification on their applicant portal, please remind them of this and see if they need to apply for a new CHICK. This should be done as soon as possible.

To check the end date of your NCS registrations' CHICK/award, log into the Early Years Hive portal and follow the below steps:

Go to the Registrations menu and select NCS Registrations

Check the 'Claim Until' date of your active registrations as an indication to when a CHICK may be ending (if you did not register all weeks on the CHICK/award, then there may be further weeks to claim)

Expand the yellow arrow on the registration you want to review and click on View

You will see a list of the claims in your service for this child; past, present and future. The "Subsidy end date" column of each claim shows the end date of the CHICK that each claim relates to. Some of these may have already expired if the claims are old ones, and these can be disregarded. By default the current/newest claim is at the bottom of the list, so this is the one you need to pay closest attention to the end date of. You can see if a claim is currently active by the "Claim start date" and "Claim end date". Note: When a new CHICK is received for a child and you are completing their new claim, the start date of the new claim must be after the "Claim end date" of the old claim. In cases where an NCS award is cancelled or terminated prematurely/prior to its original end date, the old claim should be ended on the last week the award was valid for and the new chick registered from its "Subsidy start date".

In the case of Sponsor CHICKs: the Sponsor will need to complete a new referral, having assessed the continuing need. When Pobal receives a new referral, a new Sponsor CHICK will issue. The parent of the Sponsored child cannot renew the CHICK.

For more information on NCS registrations, please the Registrations section of Resources on the Hive or raise a Request. Parents can contact the Parent Support Centre at 01 906 8530.

End-of-year webinar

An end-of-year webinar covering the above issues with NCS on the Early Years Hive and more was hosted this week. A full list of the topics covered is below:

Common Services Provider scenarios (Demo on the Hive) – Calendars, Subsidized closers and Mid-terms
Common Queries/Errors with NCS on the Hive (PowerPoint) – Common Error messages when registering a CHICK and Understanding Bridging and Grace periods

Editing on the Hive – NCS and ECCE (brief Demo) – Editing ECCE Calendar, Ending claims/creating leaver, Registrations in Past, CHICK and non-term hours

Parent Portal (brief Demo) - Parent Applicant – Difference between adding a second child to an Application & selecting on a New Application.

A recording of this webinar can be viewed here:

<https://register.gotowebinar.com/recording/3929182179178706177>

- **Force Majeure claim process for individual or very localized closures due to Covid-19 – 21st December**

Dear Service Provider

The Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Inclusion and Youth (DCEDIY) have advised that for services providing written evidence of the HSE directing them to close in full due to COVID-19 19, (thereby realizing a condition of the force majeure clause of the various Funding Arrangements), funding will continue under their ELC/SAC programmes (ECCE, NCS, CCSP Savers and TEC Savers), for the duration of the force majeure event. If you have been instructed to close your premises due to Covid-19 by the

HSE you should follow the procedures for claiming force majeure as outlined in all DCYA programme rules documents.

Services that close in whole or in part (e.g. Pod closure) due to Covid 19 concerns, without providing written evidence of instruction to do so by public health authorities, will not be given automatic funding under the force majeure conditions but instead will be considered on a case by case basis. Therefore, where services have been given a verbal instruction to close by public health officials, it is advisable that a follow up email be sought from the HSE official to ascertain in writing the closure date and the duration of that closure.

Services that choose to close in whole or in part due (e.g. Pod closure) to Covid 19 concerns without being instructed to by the HSE will not be given an automatic force majeure funding under the force majeure conditions but instead will be considered on a case by case basis with particular consideration given to evidence of unsuccessful efforts to contact the HSE.

Services that close in whole or in part due to staff shortages due to Covid 19, such as staff member/s instructed to self-isolate, will not be given an automatic funding under the force majeure conditions but instead will be considered on a case by case basis with particular consideration given to evidence of attempts to replace such staff.

Non - covid related staff shortages will not be considered under force majeure.

In relation to Covid 19 closure claims, please provide written evidence of the instruction to close. Details should include:

- DCYA Number
- Reason/explanation for closure
- Documented evidence of instruction to close in whole or in part (email/letter)
- Closure date/length of time

What are you required to do during the period your service is closed:

1. Continue to submit weekly NCS attendance returns. You must retain any documentation in relation to the closure for compliance purposes.

Please submit your request by email to pipdocuments@pobal.ie

CCSP & TEC Savers Management Window

The Savers Management Window opened on the 18th December to allow service providers to make necessary amendments to existing registrations for CCSP and TEC 2019-20 & CCSP and TEC 2020-21. The window will close on 11th January. Registrations must match the session type and pattern of attendance of children.

You are required to make any amendments to registrations in advance of 11th January 2021 to ensure compliance with scheme rules.

Recent Publications

- The 2019 annual report for the Department of Children and Youth Affairs outlines achievements and areas where significant progress was made in 2019 against the objectives outlined in our Statement of Strategy 2016 – 2019, link below.

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/7713b-department-of-children-and-youth-affairs-annual-report-2019/>

- First 5 Annual Implementation Report 2019

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/72c08-first-5-annual-implementation-report-2019/>

- Fingal Children and Young Peoples Services Committee (FCYPSC) has developed a Domestic Sexual and Gender Based Violence Resource Document (DSGBV). The resource was developed to assist professionals to support victims of Domestic, Sexual and Gender Based Violence (DSGBV) and to highlight the wide range of statutory and community services available in local areas. The resource which is the first of its kind in Dublin, provides professionals and those impacted by DSGBV with information, resources and contact details of key support services in the local areas.

[https://www.cypsc.ie/_fileupload/Documents/Resources/Fingal/30_11_2020%20CYPSC%20Domestic%20Abuse%20Resource%20Pack%20Fingal%20\(00000003\).pdf](https://www.cypsc.ie/_fileupload/Documents/Resources/Fingal/30_11_2020%20CYPSC%20Domestic%20Abuse%20Resource%20Pack%20Fingal%20(00000003).pdf)Click

Aistear Síolta Practice Guide – New Resources

Both Aistear and Síolta highlight the importance of supporting children’s holistic development including STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths). The Aistear Síolta Practice guide provides information and guidance on supporting children’s engagement with STEM. Follow the link below to access these new resources.

<https://www.aistearsiolta.ie/en/play/resources-for-sharing/...>



Barnardos Library has also developed a collection of resources for Aistear & Síolta.

<https://www.barnardos.ie/learning-development/library-information-service/siolta-aistear-resources>

LINC Resources

A Trip Down Memory Lane and the Power of Nursery Rhymes for Children and Adults!

<https://lincprogramme.ie/blog/nursery-rhymes-for-adults-and-children?fbclid=IwAR2geGuiUi2KJOyFxtt96LzdjvJ9BoBytbw368D7nUF0iIJJFZwiRMiH7ug>

Emer Ring, Dean of Early Childhood and Teacher Education at Mary Immaculate College, discusses the benefits of nursery rhymes for young children.

Tusla EYI News

- Completion of 2019 Re-registration of Early Years Preschool Services

Letter issued on the 14th December to all ELC Services regarding the completion of the re-registration process.

https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/Completion_of_re-registration_15-12-2020.pdf

- Registered Providers notice regarding fee’s, 7th December 2020.

https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/Notice_re_fees.pdf

- **Message from Tusla - Children Going Missing**

Since the reopening of Childcare services on the 29th of June Tusla have received an increase in the number of Notification of incident reports submitted relating to children going missing from Early Years services. Where this has happened a common theme has emerged. Services in their attempt to avoid close contact at entry/exit points between children, pods and adults have been using separate entry and exit doorways and in some cases multiple entry and exit points. This has created an additional risk and on occasion where the entrance/or exit door or external gates were not secured following drop off or collection, children have taken the opportunity to leave the premises unsupervised. Some of the incidents of children going missing have occurred during outdoor play and it was found that regular roll calls had not been carried out which increased the risk of children exiting unnoticed.

It is advised that Registered Providers should examine all entry and exit points and assess how they are managed to maximize child safety.

Child Protection



The Resources & Publications section <http://childsafeguardingelc.ie/resources-publications/>, contains all the most up to date documents relating to Child Protection for your perusal.

Barnardos Resources

Barnardos have developed a section that you can use within your setting and also share with families attending your service, reminding us to take the opportunity to check in with our Heart, Body and Mind regularly, please see link below.

<https://www.barnardos.ie/resources/heart-body-and-mind>

Childminding

The team at Fingal County Childcare Committee recognise that childminders play a central role in provision of both early learning and care and school-age childcare in Fingal and are committed to supporting childminders. The Development team in Fingal CCC deliver professional development training, mentoring and information on quality practice.

If you are a childminder, thinking of becoming a childminder or require any support or advice in relation to your childminding service you can contact the development team at Fingal CCC by calling our main office on (01) 4851727 or the development officer in your area:

- Mairéad Tucker, Lead Development Officer Swords and Surrounding Areas
Ph: 087 7477553 Email: mairlead@fingalcountychildcare.ie
- Jacinta Cooke, Development Officer, Balbriggan and Surrounding Areas
Ph: 087-7722228 or email jacinta@fingalcountychildcare.ie
- Nicola McKernan, Development Officer, Dublin 15, and Surrounding Areas
Ph: 087 6025263 or email nicola@fingalcountychildcare.ie

National Childhood Network Playhub

Below is the link to the NCN Playhub for daily ideas on play & activities.

<https://www.facebook.com/ncnplayhub/>

Procedure for a suspected or confirmed case of COVID 19.

The DCYA has requested the FCCC to report any suspected or confirmed case of Covid 19 within services locally. If your childcare service has a suspected or confirmed case can you, please let us know at your earliest convenience.

We would also like to remind all services that there is useful information on the First Five website in relation to infection prevention and control guidance including what to do in the event of suspected symptoms or an outbreak of Covid 19 within a service.

<https://first5.gov.ie/userfiles/files/download/035ced0228b46a3d.pdf>

Minister O’Gorman announces Book Gifting Project

The Minister announced on the 17th December an additional €450,000 Dormant Accounts Funding for a new book gifting project to early learning and care settings.

The project will see 4,500 ELC settings each receive books aimed at encouraging a love of books and reading among young children. The books will be distributed through libraries, linking early learning and care settings and children and families enrolled in these settings to the libraries in their local community.

To read the full announcement please click on the link below.

<https://www.gov.ie/en/press-release/ad8e2-minister-ogorman-announces-new-book-gifting-project-for-4500-early-learning-and-care-settings/>

Tusla QRF- E Learning

The Premises and Facilities module of the Quality and Regulatory Framework (QRF) eLearning programme is now available to access on the Tusla website;

<https://www.tusla.ie/services/preschool-services/early-years-quality-and-regulatory-framework/quality-and-regulatory-framework-elearning-programme/>

The Premises & Facilities module is the fourth module to go live and joins the Introduction, Governance and Safety Modules on the system.

The final two modules; Health, Welfare and Development of the Child and Conclusion will follow shortly in the new year.

Users who have already created an account can simply log in and commence the Premises and Facilities module. New users can create an account very easily.

<https://www.tusla.ie/services/preschool-services/early-years-quality-and-regulatory-framework/quality-and-regulatory-framework-elearning-programme/>



FCCC Christmas & New Year Opening



FCCC offices will be closing at 1pm on Wednesday 23rd December and will re-open at 9am Monday 4th January 2021.

We would like to wish you all a restful & safe holiday break and look forward to working alongside you in 2021.



FINGAL COUNTY CHILDCARE COMMITTEE – WEBSITE

FCCC website is updated daily with a broad range of information that is relevant to the early years and school age sectors in Fingal. Under LATEST NEWS you will find DCYA Updates, PIP Announcements, On-line Training, Information for parents and other topics that FCCC believes would be of interest to you, your staff, and your parents.

It is of particular importance is that providers regularly read and understand the most up to date FAQ's and PIP Announcements and if clarifications are required please contact FCCC at (01) 4851727 or contact a staff member from the list on Page 1 above.