



Westmeath County Childcare Committee
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Dear Colleagues,

These are the deadlines, important dates, and announcements for the week 21st – 25th February 2022.

DEADLINES/IMPORTANT DATES

Monday 28th Feb

- Physical distancing measures such as play-pods, and mask wearing, will no longer be required in early learning and care (ELC) and School aged Childcare (SAC) services.

Tuesday 1st March

- The Employment Wages Subsidy Scheme (EWSS) will be reduced from the enhanced rate to the flat rate of €100 per week. It will run until the end of April 2022.

Monday 14th March

- Applications for Linc inclusion coordinators will open. The programme will commence in September 22. It is fully online and 100% funded.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Changes to NCS Calendar

Its mid-term on 24th and 25th February, with the option to extend to a five-day break, If you choose to extend your break you need to make changes on your Hive and Pip portal. Please make the changes as quickly as possible so there is no delay to your payments being processed.

For more information, please see 'How to add a closure' on the NCS Service Calendar section of Help & Support on the Hive.

NCS Non-Term Hours

If you have children attending your service who require additional hours on NCS over the mid-term break, please submit non term hours for them on the Hive

For more information, please see 'How to add Non-Term hours to an NCS claim' on the NCS Child Registration section of Help & Support on the Hive.

It is important to note,

You cannot apply changes to the claim hours, opening hours and service calendar once the return for that week is submitted on the Hive, so check your details carefully.

CCSP: Amending Sessions (e.g., a child is moving from part-time to full-time)

If the registration needs updating for the mid-term from part-time to full-time, please input a CCSP Leaver with the date the child is changing attendance. Then create a new application with the updated level of service for the appropriate period. Please see pages 14/15 of the CCSP Registration Guide for further information.

Changes to Covid 19 Restrictions

On Tuesday 22nd February, Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth Roderic O’Gorman, issued a statement to ELC and SAC services. From Monday 28th Feb

In line with NPHE recommendations, physical distancing measures such as play-pods, and mask wearing, will no longer be required in ELC and SAC services. Due to the fact, that providers will have to transition the services over several weeks, the (EWSS) will remain in place until the end of April at a flat rate of €100 per week as a support to providers.

Public Holiday March 18th, 2022

This year 2022, a one-off public holiday will occur on Friday March 18th. Please do not make any changes to your calendar for 2021 -2022. The department has announced that further information and instructions will be available shortly. There is **no** action required of service providers currently.

AIM Level 7 Funding

Employment Wage Subsidy Scheme subsidy rates are due to reduce from 1st March 2022. Some services have applied for AIM level 7 and have been successful but instead chose to use the EWSS to fund AIM staff as it was more financially advantageous. Now due to the reduction in the EWSS you may choose to do the following:

Service providers who wish to return to the AIM funding must inform Pobal 10 working days in advance of the date they wish AIM Level 7 funding to commence. You do this by raising a request on the Hive.

If you have not submitted an AIM initial application or second year extension application, submit the required application form as soon as possible to avoid a break in funding.

Early years sectoral e-bulletin

Please see below a link to the February edition of the Early Years sectoral e-Bulletin from the DCEDIY
https://e.sensorpro.net/run/V4.aspx?vsid=6Qtwa4bcKrlDbESvZHKj4ctU8unGzObQ%2BbUKumM1Bm vDTMf%2BN2vyzdVyf02DN6r7_zes7

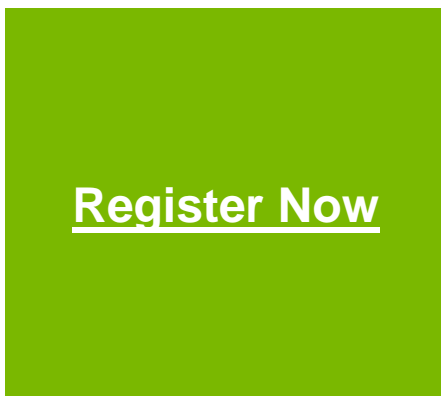
Better Start Quality Development Service

Are you interested in engaging with Better Start to develop quality in your service. If you would like to participate ELC services can contact Better Start via email quality@betterstart.ie If you would like further information, Better start will be holding webinars. Further Registration details are available on www.betterstart.ie under Training and Events. The dates are as follows:

March 23rd 7-8pm - [Webinar \(microsoft.com\)](#)

April 7th 3pm to 4pm - [Webinar \(microsoft.com\)](#)

Barnardo's free training for staff



As part of the Aontas Adult Learner Festival Barnardo's are hosting a [free online webinar on Staff Wellbeing](#). This event is for all those working in early learning and care, school age childcare and childminders.

Thursday 10th March 3.00–4.30pm

Attendance is free but places are limited.

National COVID-19 Support Helpline

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

**National Covid-19 Support
Helpline for ELC and SAC providers**

If you are a childcare provider and/or a childminder and need out of hours support in relation to a suspected or confirmed case of Covid-19 in your childcare service please contact
1800 940341

This support line is available only
**Saturdays/Sundays and Bank holidays
from 10am - 1pm and 1.30pm - 4pm**

Coronavirus
COVID-19
Public Health
Advice

There are two national helplines for services. The HSE dedicated number for ELC/SAC services who have confirmed Covid-19 cases is **01 511 9777**.

The national support helpline operates at weekends and bank holidays only.

Westmeath County Council Cathaoirleach Awards - Outdoor Environment 2022

What are we looking for?

Unique outdoor environments that promote child led learning. These environments should promote the use of natural or recycled materials. These environments can span the age groups of babies to school aged childcare.

1st Prize – Trophy & €300

2nd Prize – Trophy & €100

How to apply.

Step One: Take 5-7 photos of your outdoor learning environment (No Children's Faces). Also include your logo.

Step Two: Fill out application form attached found [here](#)

Step Three: Email photos and application to info@westmeathchildcare.ie

Step Four: Closing date 4th of March 2022.

Step Five: Winners will be invited by the Cathaoirleach of Westmeath County Council Cllr Frankie Keena to attend the annual Cathaoirleach Award event scheduled for 6th May 2022 in Belvedere House and Gardens. **All services will receive a certificate of participation in the Outdoor Environments Awards 2022.**

Step 6: All services will receive a Siolta/Aistear guide for the environment pictures they submit from Westmeath County Childcare Committee. This can be used for promotional activities for new parents or staff or at staff team meetings. The guide will be completed by WCCC staff and emailed to the service for future use.

All entrants will be uploaded to WCCC website/social media and used in promotional activities of Westmeath County Council Cathaoirleach Awards.

Email images to: info@westmeathchildcare.ie or by WhatsApp to 0876472194

Closing Date for entries 5pm on Friday 4th of March 2022.

If you have any queries in relation to any of the information above, you can contact the office on 044935454.

Warmest Regards

Westmeath County Childcare Committee CLG