



An Roinn Leanaí  
agus Gnóthaí Óige  
Department of Children  
and Youth Affairs

# COVID-19 Sustainability Support Fund

For  
Early Learning and Care Services and  
School Age Childcare Services

## Application Guidelines

October 2020



**Closing date for applications is the 13<sup>th</sup> October, 2020 @5pm**



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## 1. Introduction

The purpose of the COVID-19 Sustainability Support grant is to support the sustainability of Early Learning and Care (ELC) and School Age Childcare (SAC) services whose viability is negatively affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, by providing funding to offset losses caused by a decrease in occupancy and/or an increase in costs. Sustainability will be supported by providing a grant proportionate to the short-term level of loss in 2020 that the service has demonstrated through the information provided on the application form.

The COVID-19 Sustainability Support grant recognises that the cost of delivering services for ELC and SAC providers may be higher due to adherence to public health guidelines and combined with the financial impact of lower occupancy may result in some services becoming temporarily financially unsustainable.

This grant will ensure that services **remain open without increasing their Registered Fees to parents or guardians.**

The COVID-19 Sustainability Support Fund 2020 is **in addition** to the all-of-Government July Stimulus package for Early Learning and Care services and School Age Childcare Services.

This Fund is a fund of “**last resort**” and is additional to other funding **packages** provided by DCYA, other Government Departments and Agencies for employers and ELC/SACs.

### **The DCYA July Stimulus funding package is comprised of:**

- Continued access to the Revenue – Temporary Wage Subsidy Scheme (TWSS) to provide income support to eligible employers who continue to keep employees on their payroll until it ended on 31<sup>st</sup> August, 2020.
- Access to the Revenue operated Employment Wage Subsidy Scheme (EWSS), which replaced the TWSS on the 1<sup>st</sup> September, 2020, including a special exemption for the ELC and SAC.
- The COVID-19 Sustainability Support Fund.

### **Prior to the July Stimulus, DCYA also provided the following:**

- A once-off re-opening support payment for DCYA funded ELC and SAC services.
- A once-off COVID-19 Capital grant for DCYA funded ELC and SAC services to assist with re-opening.

## 2. Key Dates

Activity	Important Dates
COVID-19 Sustainability Support Fund Workbook, Application Form and Guidelines Available	Thursday 1 <sup>st</sup> October 2020
Support available from the City/County Childcare Committees	From Thursday 1 <sup>st</sup> October 2020
Closing date for first round of completed applications	13 <sup>th</sup> October 2020
Eligible applications with no outstanding information or clarifications required will receive first payment	30 <sup>th</sup> October 2020

## 3. Who is eligible to apply?



Community (not-for-profit) and Private (for-profit) owned Early Learning and Care and School Age Childcare services in the Republic of Ireland are eligible to apply.

Owners with no employees are eligible to apply.

### All applicants must:

- Be **registered** with Tusla.
- Have a **DCYA Reference Number** for the premises which is the subject of the application.
- Confirm that their service is currently open.
- **Be in contract** with the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) to provide Early Learning and Care Services and or School Age Childcare Services on the 12<sup>th</sup> March 2020 and be in contract for the new programme year 2020/21.
- Confirm that you have **registered with Revenue for the Employment Wage Subsidy Scheme**. **Note:** Owners with no employees are exempt from this requirement.

- Confirm that you **have adhered to your pre COVID-19 Registered Fees List** as at the 12<sup>th</sup> March, 2020. **Note:** Where a Service has reduced their hours of service for parents and or guardians since re-opening, they must have reduced their fees to parents/guardians to reflect the reduced hours of service.
- Confirm that they **have evidence of a loss of income due a reduction in occupancy and/or an increase in costs due to COVID-19** and are applying for support in relation to their short-term cash-flow position.
- Confirm that the current loss in income and/or increase in costs and or reduction in occupancy is a **direct result of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic**.
- Confirm that you are compliant with all public health and safety guidelines:
  - ✓ [COVID-19 Return to Work Safely Protocol](#)
  - ✓ [COVID-19 Infection Prevention and Control Guidance for settings providing childcare during the COVID-19 Pandemic](#).

For further information please go to: <https://first5.gov.ie/practitioners/reopening>

- **Complete the application form** (including the eligibility section) and supporting documents:
  - - ✓ COVID-19 Sustainability Support Fund Work Book
    - ✓ Sample Week Attendance Records
    - ✓ All Bank statement(s) from the 1<sup>st</sup> February, 2020 to 29<sup>th</sup> February, 2020
    - ✓ All Bank statement(s) for 24<sup>th</sup> August, 2020 to 18<sup>th</sup> September, 2020

**Submit to Pobal via e-mail [covidsustainabilityfund@pobal.ie](mailto:covidsustainabilityfund@pobal.ie)  
By 5pm on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> October, 2020.**

**Note: Application forms and supporting documents must be submitted via e-mail.** Applications submitted by post or delivered by hand to any of the Pobal offices, City/County Childcare Committee offices or DCYA offices will not be accepted or processed.

You can check your eligibility by completing Section 2 of the Application Form.

**Note:** Completing the eligibility check (Section 2 of the application form) **is not a guarantee of funding**. Funding is dependent on the information you provide in the remainder of the application form and the supporting documents.

### 3.1 Multiple service owners

**Multiple service owners** may submit an application form for any or all of their facilities, provided each facility is registered with Tusla and has a DCYA reference number. However, all services under the same ownership will be considered for funding collectively. You will be required to submit your organisation's latest accounts or annual financial statements and financial information with your application form.



### 4. Who is not eligible?



**ELC and SAC services that decide they no longer wish to continue** as an ELC and or a SAC and terminate their services and contracts with DCYA are not eligible for this grant from the date of closure.

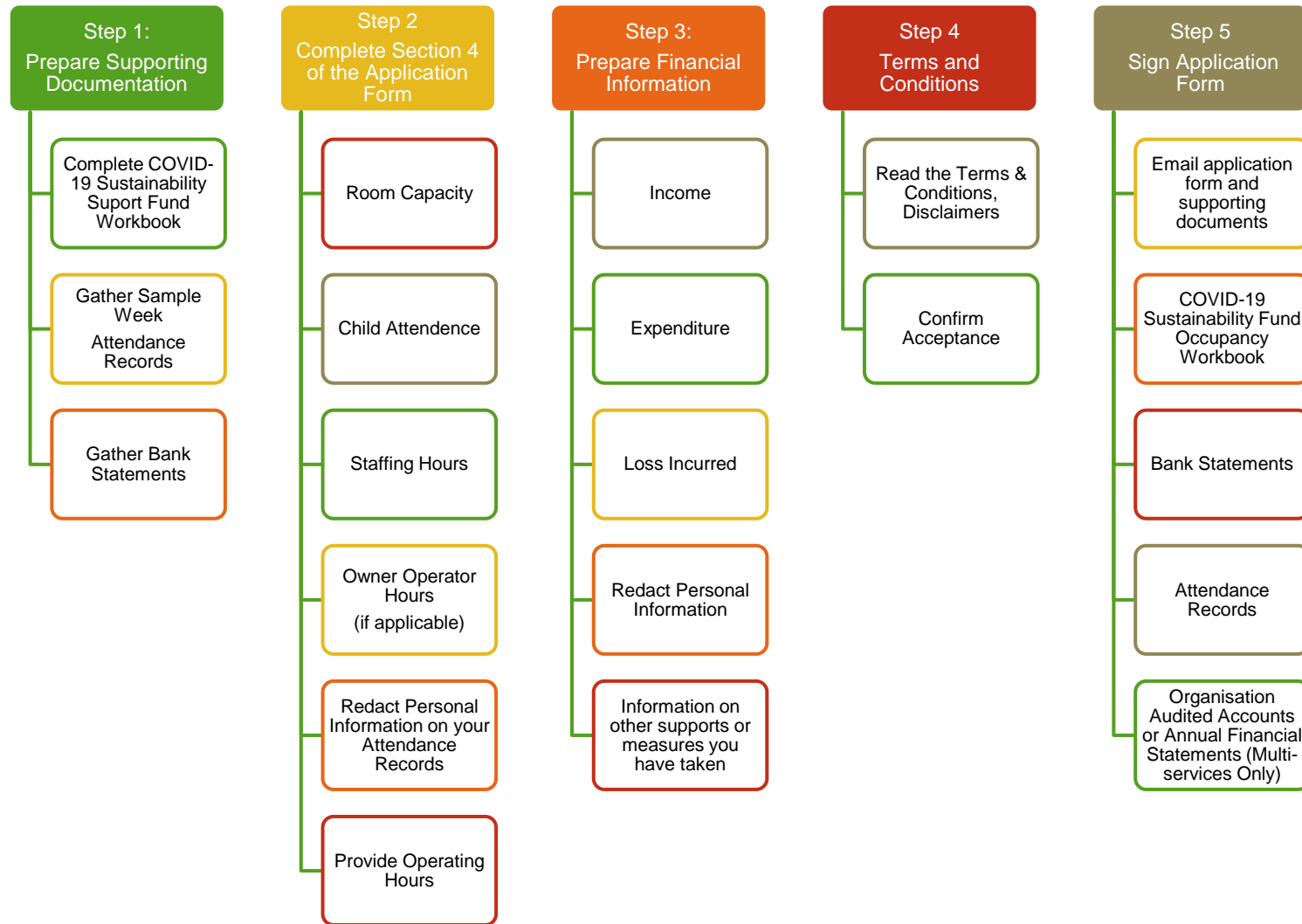
### 5. DCYA Programmes

The applicant **must be in contract with DCYA** for one or more of the following programmes to be eligible to apply for Programme Year **2020/21** and have been in contract for one of these programmes on **the 12<sup>th</sup> March 2020**.

**DCYA Programmes** for this grant are:

- National Childcare Scheme (NCS)
- Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)
- Community Childcare Subvention Programme Plus (CCSP)
- Community Childcare Subvention Resettlement (CSSR)
- Community Childcare Subvention Resettlement Transition (CSSR-T)
- Training and Employment Childcare (TEC)

# Overview of the Key Steps



## 6. Completing the Application Form

### Step 1: Prepare the following information:

#### 1. Download the **COVID-19 Sustainability Support Fund Occupancy Workbook**

- This workbook is in an Excel format.
- The workbook template will **automatically calculate the occupancy figures** which are necessary to **complete the following sections** of the application form. For example, formulas in the template work out the Full Time Equivalent (**FTEs**) capacity for your facility.
- You must **insert specific details for each room** within the facility into the workbook.
  - ✓ 4.1 Room Capacity and Child Attendance
  - ✓ 4.2 Staffing
- **Do not include any child names in the workbook**
- This workbook must be **completed in advance** of your application form.
- **You must submit a copy of the completed workbook with the application form.**



**The City/County Childcare Committees** are on hand to provide any support that is required to fill in both the COVID-19 Sustainability Support Fund Workbook and the Application Form.

<https://myccc.ie/where-is-my-nearest-ccc>

#### 2. Sample Attendance Records

To support your application you must submit:

- A copy of the attendance record for a sample week in February 2020 (Pre-COVID-19), as selected in your COVID-19 Sustainability Support Workbook.
- A copy of the attendance record for a sample week in August/September 2020 as selected in your COVID-19 Sustainability Support Workbook.



You must **redact the names of children, parents/guardians** from the attendance records before you submit them with your application form.



### 3. Operating Hours

You must provide the operating hours for your facility i.e. the hours when your service is available to parents and guardians for February 2020 and August/September 2020. If the **service's operating hours** have **changed** from February 2020 to August/September 2020, for example, you were open from 8am but you are now opening at 9am, please **provide a reason** why you have changed these times.



#### And /or

If your service's **range of services** has **changed between February 2020 and August/September 2020** for example, in February 2020 you offered services for children from 0 to 2 years and 8 months and in August/September 2020, this service is no longer available, please **provide a reason** why you are not now offering this service.

### Step 3 Financial Information

#### Bank Statements

- Copy of a Bank Statement(s) from 1<sup>st</sup> February to 29<sup>th</sup> February 2020
- Copy of a Bank Statement (s) from 24<sup>th</sup> August to 18<sup>th</sup> September 2020



You must submit copies of all bank statements for all accounts associated with this facility for the periods above. **Failure to provide all relevant bank statements will result in your application being ineligible.**

Please remember to **redact all personal information** from your bank statements before you submit them.



#### Owners or Boards of Management of Multi-Services (only)

Please submit a copy of your latest audited accounts or annual financial statements for your overall business/organisation with your application form.

## Income



**From your accounting records** you must provide details on your income for the period from the 1st February, 2020 to 29<sup>th</sup> February 2020 and for the period from the 24<sup>th</sup> August 2020 to the 18<sup>th</sup> September 2020.

Income from DCYA programmes e.g. ECCE, NCS, AIM etc., will be automatically included by Pobal.

**Parental/Guardian Income:** This is the income you receive directly from parents/guardians for your services.

**Projected or Actual income from the Employment Wage Subsidy Scheme (EWSS):** This is the income you project for September 2020 only from Revenue. Please refer to [Revenue's Guidelines on the Operation of EWSS](#) for the subsidy rates which will assist you in calculating your projected income.

Service providers who identify as sole traders with no employees or owner/occupiers with no employees are not required to complete this field.

**Other income:** This refers to income which you may receive in the form of grants or payments for example, from Tusla or DCYA or fundraising activities or donations in respect of the service(s) you provide.

**If you do not receive income from other sources enter zero on the application form.**

Please ensure that the **income included in the application form corresponds to the bank statement(s)** submitted for February 2020 and the period from the 24<sup>th</sup> August 2020 to 18<sup>th</sup> September 2020.

## Expenditure

**From your accounting records** you must provide details on your **expenditure** from the 1<sup>st</sup> February, 2020 to 29<sup>th</sup> February, 2020 and for the period from the 24<sup>th</sup> August, 2020 to the 18<sup>th</sup> September, 2020.

**Total salary costs:** Calculate the total monthly staff salary (employment) costs for all employees for February 2020 and for period from the 24<sup>th</sup> August, 2020 to the 18<sup>th</sup> September, 2020. Include in this figure your employers PRSI costs, any employer pension contribution costs.



**Note:** Sole traders must not include drawings (as outlined below) or their own personal pension contributions in the salary costs included in the application form.

**Drawings:** This is money withdrawn from the business by the business owner for personal use. The figures entered should be verifiable on the bank statement(s) supporting your application.

Drawings are only applicable to privately owned services who are sole traders are not paid as an employee as part of their business.

### **Other Costs:**

List **all costs** which you paid out in relation to your service in February 2020 and for the period 24<sup>th</sup> August, 2020 to 18<sup>th</sup> September, 2020 e.g. cleaning, telephone costs.

Please ensure that the **expenditure included in the application form corresponds to the bank statement(s)** submitted for February 2020 and the period from the 24<sup>th</sup> August 2020 to 18<sup>th</sup> September 2020.

**You must retain the documentation and calculations (evidence)** used to complete the financial section of this application form. You may be asked to submit this information at a later date or provide this information should your service be subject to a visit or check from DCYA, Pobal or one of its agents.

### **Steps taken to date to address your financial position.**

Applicants are required to **clearly outline what measures or actions** they have undertaken **to address their current financial situation**. For example, provide details of any other grants or supports or subsidies that you have applied for. Do include those which you have been approved for, are in progress or have not been approved.

### **Additional Information (Optional)**

If your financial position has changed significantly since the 18<sup>th</sup> September, 2020 you may include details in the additional information box on the application form and attach additional bank statement(s) as evidence.

If you have room closures, changes in age ranges, opening hours and or staff numbers which are impacting you financially or the level of service you can now offer, please provide this information in this section of the application form.

## Terms & Conditions and Disclaimers

There are a significant number of specific terms and conditions on the application form. It is very important that **the owner(s), board of management and or management committee reads, understands and accepts all the terms and conditions and disclaimers** on the application form.

To be considered for funding applicants must accept all terms and conditions and disclaimers outlined in the application form.

Please note the **application form is your contract (grant agreement)** with DCYA should your application be successful for the COVID-19 Sustainability Support Fund.

## 7. How will the grant be calculated?

The **occupancy and financial information** provided in the application form will contribute to determining the financial position of each applicant. **Other information** not provided in the application form will also be considered. For example, audit and verification findings, performance to date, audited accounts or annual financial statements will also be considered.



For **owner(s) of multiple services**, their **applications will be considered jointly**. The overall financial health of the organisation/business will be taken in account in addition to the information outlined above.

## 8. Decision Making



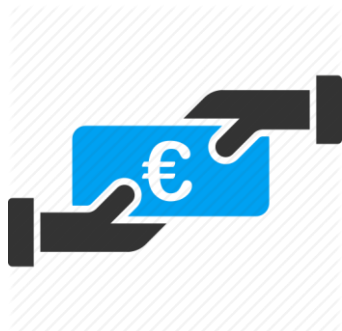
Findings on the grant applications will be made by Pobal to DCYA, who will make the final decision on all applications.

The outcome of the application process **will be communicated to all applicants** via e-mail by Pobal. We will endeavour to communicate the outcome of the application process to everyone at the same time. If there is a delay in communicating the decision on your application for example, due to the large volume of applications received, we will keep you updated on decision timeframes.

## 8.1 Reviews

If you are unhappy with the decision you will have an opportunity to seek a review of the original process. Guidelines for the review process will be provided to unsuccessful applicants with the notification of the decision.

## 9. How will the grant be paid?



Your grant will be paid in **instalments**.

The **first instalment** will be paid based on the information you have provided in the eligibility check and application form.

Any **subsequent payments will be based on a review** of your service. Pobal will **review** the level of **registrations** and contract **values** for each facility for each month. If your registrations and contract values have increased Pobal will be in contact with you to determine if there is a continued need for the payment.

If you feel that **your financial position remains critical you may be required to submit the following before any second or subsequent payments are made:**

- an updated COVID-19 Sustainability Support Fund Workbook and supporting documents to support your continued need for the COVID-19 Sustainability Support Fund grant

**Or**

**If your financial position has improved sufficiently you may be required to:**

- sign a declaration form that you no longer require payments from the COVID-19 Sustainability Support Fund

## 10. Eligible Costs

The grant may be used to pay for or to make a contribution towards costs which are related to the direct delivery of the ELC or SAC service(s).

**Examples of eligible and ineligible costs are listed below.**

Eligible Costs	Ineligible Costs
Existing rent or lease or licence agreements for the service facility	Refurbishment Costs
Rates for the facility	Capital items of the expenditure such as the purchase of a building, furniture
Utility bills for the service such as heat, light, phone, broadband and water	Relocation costs
Insurance	Staff salaries which are funded from another source(s) e.g. donations/fundraising; statutory or public funding; other philanthropic funding.
Website maintenance	Redundancies
Cleaning, refuse and hygiene, pest control	Drawings, including pension top-ups for sole traders/self-employed owners.
Security	Any costs unrelated to the delivery of the ELC or SAC service e.g. family supports for services with a broader mission
Legal Fees	Personal expenditure
Salary costs for employees less EWSS subsidy <b>Note:</b> Only those salaries or part of salaries that are not funded from other funding, including statutory or public funding, are eligible	
Salary Top-ups to employees in receipt of EWSS	
Pension contributions for employees employed in the facility	
Employers PRSI contributions for staff employed in the facility	
Food and consumables for the facility	
Mortgage and Loan Repayments for the facility	
<b>The above are not an exhaustive list. For costs to be considered they must be directly related to the delivery of the ELC and SAC services.</b>	

### 10.1 What dates is expenditure eligible from?

Expenditure is eligible from the 24<sup>th</sup> August 2020 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020.

## 11. Reporting Requirements for successful applicants

All applicants are required to submit a **Completion Report** in January 2021. A Completion Report template and guidelines will be made available to successful applicants.

### Please note:

1. Any unspent grant as at 31st December 2020 must be refunded to DCYA/Pobal.
2. Any grant monies spent on ineligible expenditure will be recouped by DCYA/Pobal.
3. Some Service Providers will be requested by Pobal to submit evidence of expenditure i.e. invoices, receipts and bank statements as part of the verification checks for this programme.
4. Some Service Providers may be subject to a site visit to inspect documentation and all relevant information in relation to this grant.
5. Pobal will be undertaking checks on the information provided on the Application Form. Providing inaccurate or incomplete information may render the entire grant liable for recoupment.

Please **retain the following information** in relation to the purchases made with the grant:

- Quotations in line with the public procurement guidelines.
- Evidence of tendering processes in line with the public procurement guidelines.
- Receipts
- Invoices
- Bank Statements showing the payments.
- Rental, lease or licence agreements.
- Service provider agreements.

These documents must be available for submission or inspection if required by DCYA/Pobal or any of their agent.

## 12. Requirements for the COVID-19 Sustainability Support Fund

### All applicants must:

1. Have a DYCA Reference Number
2. Be tax compliant
3. Be registered with Tusla
4. Comply with GDPR
5. Comply with public procurement guidelines

### 12.1 DCYA Reference Number

If you have a valid DCYA reference number there is **no** further action required.



### 12.2 Tax Compliance

Before a grant award is made and before any payments are made to an applicant Pobal checks with Revenue using the services Tax Clearance Access Number (TCAN) that the service is tax compliant. Services which are not tax compliant will not receive a grant award or a payment of a grant.

### 12.3 General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)



Early Learning and Care Services and School Age Childcare Services must ensure that they are fully aware and comply with their obligations and responsibilities in relation to processing personal data within their service(s).

The personal information that is requested as part of the application form and process is as follows:

- **Primary contact name and e-mail address** for the application

In addition to requesting the above information by submitting the application for funding the service owner(s)/board of directors or management committee for the service is giving:



- **Permission for Pobal/DCYA to use your Tax Reference Number** for the purpose of validating if the applicant Childcare Service has registered for the EWSS.
- By agreeing the terms and conditions on the application form the applicant is expressly consenting to Revenue providing this validating information to DCYA.
- Permission to DCYA to share information with other Departments for research purposes in relation to the impact of COVID-19 on the early years' sector.

Please refer to the Data Protection Commission for additional information in relation obligations in relation to GDPR. Here is a link to their website: [Data Protection Commission Guidance](#)

## 12.4 Public Procurement

In relation to the spending the grant:

- All applicants **must comply with public procurement guidelines**.
- Information on public procurement is available from the Office of Government Procurement [www.etenders.gov.ie](http://www.etenders.gov.ie)

## 12.5 Conflicts of Interest

A conflict of interest is any form of personal interest, which may impact (or be perceived by others as impacting) upon your impartiality when selecting a supplier/contractor for goods and services. **Personal interest includes cases where a relative or another person connected to your organisation tenders or quotes to provide goods or services to your organisation.**



In addition the Irish Charities Regulator has useful information in relation to [Managing Conflicts of Interest](#).

## Contact Information



If you need any additional assistance you should **contact your local City/County Childcare Committee (CCC)**. You can find the contact details of your local City/County Childcare Committee at this link <https://myccc.ie/>