



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



Funding Measures for

Early Learning and Care (ELC) and School Age Childcare (SAC) services over

1 February – 5 March 2021

Funding Agreement Guidelines

February 2021

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Introduction

Following Cabinet approval on 26th January for the continuation of additional measures under full Level 5 restrictions, the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, Roderic O’Gorman, T.D., announced new funding measures to support the early learning and childcare sector for the period 1st February – 5th March 2021.

These measures have been designed to ensure that the significant amount of public money that is being invested in services at this time is structured in a fair and balanced way. It is currently planned for these arrangements to be in place until 5th March, with the timeframe remaining subject to review in the context of evolving public health circumstances.

The Minister also confirmed that the pre-school (ECCE) programme will continue to be suspended during these extended restrictions and that other early learning and childcare services should remain open for children whose parents work in an essential service and/or for vulnerable children.

Contracting Process

The contracting process for ELC/SAC funding measures covering the period 1st February – 5th March will be available on Hive from **Friday, 12th February until close of business on Friday, 26th February**.

All ELC and SAC services, including ECCE only services are required to engage in this process in order to determine standard and/or enhanced funding levels and to accept the terms and conditions of funding.

A detailed guide on how to complete the contracting process on Hive can be found [here](#).

Funding Available

The level of funding available to a service is dependent on whether they are open or closed. There are two funding streams available: standard and enhanced payments.

All Open Services:

Standard Payments:	Enhanced Payments:	Conditions for enhanced payments (see FAQ below for further detail)
EWSS	Covid-19 Support Payment (CSP) for services that may have a high degree of reliance on parental fees	Waive fees for non-participating children; hold children's places; seek to retain staff; engage with ECCE children not attending the service
100% of NCS, CCSP, TEC and AIM Level 7 funding	Additional ECCE compensatory provision which will equate to 30% of current ECCE funding.	
70% of ECCE Funding	Access to sustainability funding where required	

Closed services with closure approved by DCEDIY:

Standard Payments:	Enhanced Payments:	Conditions for both enhanced and standard payments
EWSS	Covid-19 Support Payment for services that may have a high degree of reliance on parental fees	Waive fees for all children; hold children's places; seek to retain staff; engage with ECCE children not attending the service
	100% of NCS, CCSP, TEC and AIM Level 7 funding	
	ECCE compensatory provision which will be equal to 70% of current ECCE funding	

Services Closed under instruction from Public Health:

Standard Payments:	Enhanced Payments:	Conditions for both enhanced and standard payments
EWSS	Covid-19 Support Payment for services that may have a high degree of reliance on parental fees	Waive fees for all children; hold children's places; seek to retain staff; engage with ECCE children not attending the service
100% of NCS, CCSP, TEC and AIM Level 7 funding		
ECCE compensatory provision which will be equal to 70% of current ECCE funding	Additional ECCE compensatory provision which will equate to 30% of current ECCE funding.	

Open/Closed Status (including Force Majeure)

To determine standard and/or enhanced funding levels, services must indicate on a weekly basis whether they are open or closed throughout the period 1st Feb – 5th March.

If a service is closed, a reason must be provided and where necessary supporting documentation attached. Closure information will be reviewed and approved or declined as appropriate. This process will replace the current off-line Force Majeure for the week of submission only. Weekly Force Majeure due to lack of demand must be submitted on a weekly basis through normal processes.

Covid 19 Standard Operating Payment (COSP)

The Covid-19 Operating Support Payment (COSP) is intended to support services that are reliant on parental fees to remain sustainable during the period of high level restrictions and meet the condition of not charging fees for families whose children are not attending the service.

On 2 February 2020, all services that were deemed eligible for this payment received confirmation of their eligibility and details of the amount of funding they were entitled to. Details of the COSP eligibility criteria and how the approved funding amounts were determined can be found [here](#).

In order to receive COSP funding, eligible services must accept the terms and conditions of funding in the contracting process on HIVE and, if closed, have an approved closure period (See Force Majeure above).

Services awaiting the outcome of a COSP review request, should not complete the contracting process until the review outcome has been finalised.

Terms and Conditions of funding

As part of the contracting process services must accept the following terms and conditions;

- Be open during the period 1 February to 5 March and providing ELC or SAC, or closed with permission of the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) or at the direction of the Government, DCEDIY or public health authorities;
- Currently be registered to provide the DCEDIY childcare programme (ECCE,NCS, CCSP and/or TEC) and have at least one registered child in the week ending 13/12/2020;
- Not charge parental fees for the period 1 February to 5 March for any children who are not attending the service, whether or not they are receiving a subsidy under any of the following DCEDIY funding schemes – ECCE, NCS, CCSP and TEC;
- Maintain places for all children in the service, including those who do not attend between 1 February and 5 March;
- Make all reasonable effort to retain all of the staff in the service;
- Make all reasonable effort to engage with ECCE children who are not attending the service.
- Make all reasonable efforts to engage staff who are not attending the premises to participate in continuing professional development, planning or administrative activities.

Payment Schedule

Services who have contracted by **COB on Monday 15th February**, and who have confirmed that they will be open for all weeks in the period, will be paid on **Friday 19th February**. Service Providers who have indicated closed weeks in the period, will require review and on approval will be paid in the subsequent weekly payment run.

To ensure services are receiving funding as quickly as possible, payments will be issued on a weekly basis from 19th February onwards.

Useful dates

ACTIVITY	IMPORTANT DATES
Open for online process	Friday 12 th February, 2021 @ 10am*
Closing date for online process	Friday 26 th February, 2021 @ 5pm*
Payment dates	From Friday 19 th February, 2021 (weekly payments runs after this date)
*Times are subject to change	

Help and Support

If you require any further clarifications or information please contact the Early Years Provider Centre (EYPC) by submitting a **HIVE Service Request** and selecting the following categories:

- **Request Type Detail:** COSP General Query
- **Request Type:** COSP
- **Programme Request:** Covid 19 Supports