

## **Department of Children and Youth Affairs**

### **FAQs on the proposed Early Years protest 5 February 2020**

The Department of Children and Youth Affairs understands that some childcare providers intend to close, or reduce their service provision, to support a protest on 5 February, 2020. The Department has received a number of queries from providers and parents relating to this matter.

In order to assist everyone affected, the Department would like to offer the following information:

#### **What do services need to do if they are going to close or reduce their service on Feb 5?**

- If a service intends to close, or partially close as a result of the protest, providers must submit their revised calendars to Pobal in advance of the closure.
- Providers should indicate on their revised calendar the day in lieu they intend to provide for 5 February. Any alternative opening day should be on a day which is suitable to parents and children.
- Where an alternative day is not possible, the provider must inform Pobal through the PIP system.

#### **What do services need to do if they are going to close or reduce their service on Feb 5?**

- If a service closes, or partially closes as a result of the protest, providers must submit their revised calendars to Pobal in advance of any closure.
- In addition, providers must notify Pobal that they have closed (or partially closed) on 5 February, so that payments can be adjusted accordingly. Again, this provision is in line with the Funding Agreements signed by providers. Pobal will, in early February, publish a form on PIP for providers to use to notify them of a closure. This form will make clear the timeframe requirement for the notification.

#### **Can City / County Childcare Committees advise services about protesting?**

- City / County Childcare Committees have no role in advising providers about any decision to protest.
- They remain available to assist parents and providers with regard to all DCYA schemes and initiatives.

#### **Do services have DCYA funding stopped when a child is late, sick or goes home early?**

- Changes to funding support for a child are made only when a child changes their pattern of attendance, for example for full day to part time, or from a 5 day week to a 4 day week.
- If a child has a serious illness, the provider can receive funding from the Department, even if the child is absent for up to 12 weeks. Pobal or the CCCs are available to provide further information on this as required.

**Reports suggest that a significant number of services have closed, are these reports correct?**

- The Department is not aware that any service has had to close due to being refused insurance. Tusla has also said that every service which intended to re-register succeeded in doing so.
- The number of services in operation remains stable at approximately 4,500 and capacity has increased year on year.
- That said, DCYA is aware of the many challenges that exist for providers and continues to make support available, through a variety of sources.

**What was the average Programme Support Payment paid out in December?**

- The average Programme Support Payment that issued in December was €1,500 and ranged from small amounts to very large amounts, depending on the size of the service and the number of children on DCYA schemes.

**Is it true that there has been no increase to capitation in recent years?**

- The ECCE capitation was increased by 7% in January 2018.
- In addition to this increase in both the standard and higher capitation payments, the Department changed the rules relating to higher capitation for ECCE in 2016 to enable more services to access it.
- Currently 50% of all ECCE services are in receipt of higher capitation, compared to 10% in 2010. Other additional payments have been introduced, for example, under AIM, additional funding of €2 per ECCE child, per week, for services with Inclusion Coordinators. In 2019 €27m was paid to providers in Programme Support Payments.
- The maximum subsidy to parents available under the NCS now stands at €204 per child per week whereas under the previous DCYA funding schemes, including the CCSP and TEC, the maximum subsidy was €145.