COVID-19 Emergency Measures – Temporary Wage Subsidy Scheme for the Childcare Sector

Dear Provider,

Further to my correspondence of the 30th March and 9th April 2020, I write to provide an update on the new administrative scheme, the Wage Subsidy Childcare Scheme (WSCS), being developed to support the Early Learning and Care and School-Age Childcare sector at this difficult time.

The WSCS will replace the temporary arrangements that were in place from 13th March 2020. Ex gratia payments made under the temporary arrangements will cease and Early Learning and Care and School-Age Childcare programmes (ECCE, NCS, CCSP, TEC) will be suspended from 10th April 2020 for all providers who have been required to close due to the Covid-19 crisis.

As you are aware, the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in an unprecedented situation. This has required a series of emergency responses from the Government. It has also required a series of emergency responses from other EU Member States and indeed other international states more generally.

The immediate but temporary response of my Department to the decision of An Taoiseach to announce the closure of Early Learning and Care and School-Age Childcare services on 13th March was to continue programme payments on an ex-gratia basis. With the Government’s announcement of the COVID-19 Temporary Wage Subsidy Scheme on March 24 to assist all sectors, the Department of Children and Youth Affairs developed the WSCS as a specific response to the crisis for the Early Learning and Care and School-Age Childcare sector, in addition to other Government supports.

The WSCS is built around the Revenue operated Temporary Wage Subsidy Scheme and the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection Pandemic Unemployment Payment. Other measures have also been introduced by Government to support businesses and I would encourage providers to seek out all available supports at this difficult time.

As outlined in an earlier statement to providers today, the Funding Agreement for the WSCS will issue next week, along with an updated Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ).
I appreciate your ongoing patience as my Department continues to work hard to introduce this new scheme for the Early Learning and Care and School-Age Childcare sector.

Yours sincerely

[Signature]

Dr. Katherine Zappone
Minister for Children and Youth Affairs