

County Wicklow Public Participation Network

Representative Reporting Template

This template aims to support CWPPN representatives who sit on local social partnership structures in County Wicklow in providing a report to the wider membership. Please complete the template and return to countywicklowppn@gmail.com **within one week after each meeting**. Please keep responses to 1 page if at all possible.

Name of Committee: Wicklow County Childcare Committee

Name of Representative(s): Margaret Coen

Date of Meeting Attended: 28th Nov 2019

Most important actions or issues to emerge from a County Wicklow PPN perspective:

National Childcare Scheme (NCS) and provider stress: Long discussions arising from deadlines for registration and national media coverage for NCS – stress and frustration from providers: NCS is the latest in a number of significant changes to the sector in the last number of years, both in terms of compliance, payments and inspections, and this may be the final straw for many – requirements for fire certification, insurance issues, lack of clarity in registration requirements from DCYA/POBAL leading to tight turn around over holidays in order for services to reopen, differing standards for early years sector compared to primary sector causing issues for services that co-locate. There is a fear that some childminders will be driven into the black market due to the onerous demands on the sector. WCCC has provided one to one support to both providers and parents in over 460 cases specifically related to NCS.

Community Childcare Subvention Plus (CCSP): This scheme has now closed and is replaced by the NCS. However, an anomaly exists. If a child is currently in receipt of this they will continue to receive this grant, and this covers afterschool activities, e.g., homework clubs. If the parents of such a child have another child they must apply for NCS and if they are in Band A they will not be entitled to a grant for afterschool activities. This example shows that it is unfair for one child in a family to avail of supports that another cannot access, but this also applies across communities. The NCS needs to address these issues to ensure all children's rights are supported – payment should be based on child and family need, not on encouraging labour activation.

Community Childcare Subvention Resettlement (CCSR(T)) Scheme: Provides access to free childcare for children of families experiencing homelessness – it is also the mechanism used for supporting children who are refugees. However, the sponsoring programme is not yet up and running (what organisation will pay). This means that for example refugee Syrian children attending services do not receive a payment, so

providers either refuse or provide a place free of charge and hope for a refund sometime in the future. As most services are operating with very tight margins this is placing a lot of stress on providers.

Governance: WCCC feel it is important to have some provider expertise among board members and are actively seeking board members who are providers – either private community or childminders. This is important as key board members who stepped down last year or due to step down this year are providers.

Policy and procedures: Board handbook draft was read by members and suggestions noted. It will be amended and forwarded for approval to board at the next meeting.

Child protection training: WCCC completed 6 courses for services in the county in 2019 and will run an additional 2 courses in 2020.

Communications: Website hits to end Sept 2019 – 51, 734. A good source of information for providers and parents.

Date of next meeting – 30th Jan 2020