

Progress Report on Wicklow County Childcare for WPPN.

Based on meetings attended in November 2016, January, February, March & April.

Some highlights of work completed in County Wicklow in 2016 included:

Completing training of all childcare services in Always Children First, the national child protection training programme;

Bringing a BA in Early Years at level 7 on the National Qualifications Framework to the Carlow IT Claremont Campus in Rathnew, and ensuring it would be included on the DCYA list of acceptable qualifications for higher capitation rates for the free preschool year. This means that those with a QQI level 6 in childcare can now complete a degree in one year. There are about 50 people currently in the programme..

Piloting a national project on over-reliance on CE workers in community childcare services and securing CE Childcare training programme for West Wicklow alongside the existing one in East Wicklow. Because of the study on over-reliance, €3 million has been made available to those community childcare services nationally to allow for hiring more childcare workers; two services in Co. Wicklow will benefit directly from this.

Commencing and supporting engagement with Access Inclusion Model for children with special needs- with services in our area receiving funding for direct supports. In 2017-2018, free training in AIM will be rolled out across the county by the WCCC.

As of the end of March, Eugene Waters is transferring to DCYA to work on the new Affordable Childcare Scheme. Whilst the DCYA borrows Eugene, Assumpta O'Neill will be becoming the Acting County Childcare Manager. The Affordable Childcare Scheme is intended to offer some financial support to all parents availing of childcare for very young children; the exact amount will depend on the family income. It is hoped to launch it in September 2017, although the full roll out will take longer. This is in addition to the two Free Preschool years now available for all 3-5 year olds as of September 2016.

Finally, IT Carlow in conjunction with Wicklow County Childcare Committee are enrolling for the Level 7 Bachelor of Arts in Applied Early Childhood Education & Care, commencing September 2017 - May 2018. Applications can be submitted from 14th March to WCCC.

For more information, go to www.wccc.ie.