

# ROSCOMMON COUNTY CHILDCARE COMMITTEE CHILDCARE PROGRAMMES LOCAL IMPLEMENTATION PLAN 2016



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# Roscommon County Childcare Committee Childcare Programmes Local Implementation Plan 2016

## Introduction

### Section 1 – Introduction to Roscommon CCC 2015 Local Implementation Plan (2015)

The primary role of Roscommon County Childcare Committee LTD (Roscommon CCC) is to implement the current National Childcare Programme in County Roscommon on behalf of the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA). Roscommon CCC collaborates with Childcare Services, Statutory Bodies, Community and Voluntary Sector, Childcare Organisations, Parents and Children and elected representatives to continue the positive development of quality, affordable and accessible childcare in County Roscommon.

Above all, Roscommon CCC is committed to ensuring that it adopts a child-centred approach in implementing its local implementation plan (LIP) that contributes to the development of high quality accessible, affordable childcare in county Roscommon.

In 2015 Roscommon County Childcare Committee Committee's workload was dedicated to meeting the key priorities set out in the Local Implementation Plan 2015. During this period a significant level of support work was provided to services regarding the PIP system, sustainability concerns and assisting services to comply with current childcare regulations and compliance visits. Roscommon CCC staff also provided individual and cluster support sessions to services on the DCYA funding applications, child registrations, fee policies, governance and best practice. Roscommon CCC recorded 139 support calls with services re; PIP & Fee Policies. 158 supports calls with services re; PIP and registrations, during a short period of approximately six weeks. Roscommon CCC had 36 services availed of office support session with PIP.

## Local, National & Regional Context - Collaboration & Partnerships

As a part of the Childcare Committees Ireland Collaborative, the fundamental strength of being part of the City and County Childcare Committee structure is not only our local response and national reach – it is our ability to be flexible in responding to policy change and development. CCCs have a unique ability to monitor, collect and collate national data making us both a valuable support, implementation and delivery mechanism. Roscommon CCC makes a significant contribution to this work on an ongoing basis and is a CCI representative on the National Education and Health Steering Group under DCYA, is also a member of the CCI disability task group and a member of Quality Development out Of School Services (QDOSS).

## **County Wide**

- Local authorities i.e. Roscommon County Council, (Community & Enterprise, Housing and Planning, Elected representatives), TUSLA/HSE, Roscommon CYPSC, Roscommon Leader Partnership Company, Local Enterprise Organisation, GRETB, Dept. Social Protection, Roscommon Sports Partnership, Roscommon Community Forum, Brothers of Charity Roscommon, Roscommon Early Intervention Services (REIS), Roscommon Brothers of Charity (BoC), Colleges & I.T.'s , National Learning Network, Football Association of Ireland, Providers Networks and CE Sponsor.

## **Regionally**

- CCCs - Roscommon CCC with link with neighbouring CCCs as required. Services on the border will be accommodated on Roscommon CCC Child Protection training as required and in consultation with neighbouring CCCs. RCCC will link with CCCs as appropriate.

## **Nationally**

Currently Roscommon CCC is an active member of Childcare Committee Ireland (CCI) a national network for all Childcare Committee's. In 2015, Roscommon CCC represents CCI on Quality Development Out Of School Services (QDOSS), the Interdepartmental committee for disabilities, The National Education & Health Steering group under DCYA and the Parent & Toddler National Working Group. Roscommon CCC will continue to be an active member of CCI in 2016 and will also attend the National Management Meetings where DCYA/Pobal/CCCs/NCVOS come together.

- CCI, DCYA (Childcare Directorate, EYEPU), Pobal, Better Start, National Voluntary Childcare Organisations, QDOSS (Quality Development of out of School Services – School Age Childcare), NALA, NCCA, Interdepartmental cross sectoral committee and CCI working groups to progress national actions
- Roscommon CCC continue to work in a collaborative manner with local and national agencies to ensure consistency in approach through sharing of information and resources and cohesive planning.

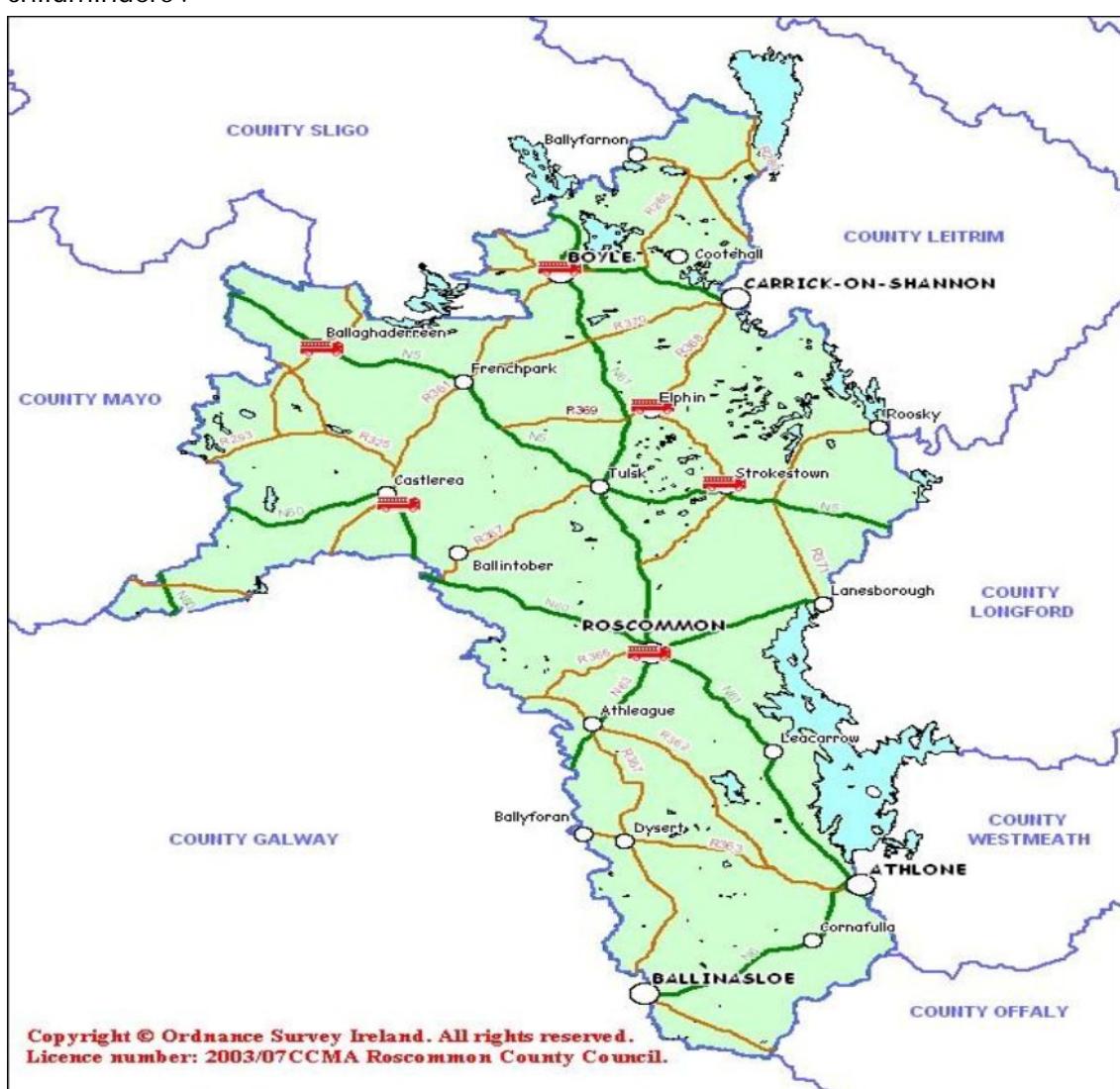
Roscommon CCC staff will assist the Manager to implement the Roscommon CCC's 2016 annual work programme and assist with the development of quality childcare services for the County. In all aspects of their work, the Roscommon CCC Staff work collaboratively with, and link effectively to all other agencies with a remit in the area of childcare (e.g. National Childcare Investment Programme, Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA), Pobal, Tusla/HSE, Department of Social Protection, National Childcare Voluntary Organisations, Early Years Education Policy Unit and Better Start for the purposes of promoting effective policies, quality services and maximum impact.

## Socio-Demographic Profile of County Roscommon

This section presents an outline of the socio-demographic profile of Roscommon and is based on a number of reports including the Census of Population 2011 and Roscommon CCC Census 2015.

### County Profile

Roscommon is one of five counties in the province of Connacht and has borders with Galway, Mayo, Sligo, Leitrim, Longford, Westmeath and Offaly. It is the only county in Connacht that does not have a coast line and Roscommon town is the main County town. Roscommon has 16 full day care services, 39 sessional services, 20 afterschool services, 18 Parent & Toddler groups, 15 RCCC voluntary notified childminders and 2 Tusla notified childminders .



The CSO 2011 indicated that the population of Roscommon was 64,065, consisting of 32,353 males and 31,712 females. This represents a rise of 9.3 per cent in the population since the 2006 Census. Roscommon is the third most rural county in Ireland with 74 % of the population living in rural areas.

The main centres of population in the County are Roscommon Town (population of 5,693), Castlerea (population of 1,985), Ballaghadeereen (population of 1,822) and Boyle (population of 1,459).

Table 1: Breakdown of Population under 25 years

<b>Population 2011</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>State</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
0-4 years	4,642	7.2%	356,329	7.8%
5 -9 years	4,533	7.1%	320,770	7.0%
10-14 years	4,405	6.9%	302,491	6.6%
15-19 years	3,781	5.9%	283,019	6.2%
20-24 years	3,322	5.2%	297,231	6.5%

Source CSO 2011

The table above shows that 21.2% of the population of county Roscommon are under 14 years of age, the target population for Roscommon CCC. This is compared to the national rate of 21.4 %

#### Profile of population in County Roscommon

<b>Indicator &amp; Source</b>	Roscommon 2011
Total Population CSO	64,065
Child population CSO	15,866 children under 18
Children with Disabilities  National Intellectual Disability Database and National Physical and Sensory Disability Database	Number of children registered as having an intellectual disability were 177, while the number registered as having a physical or sensory disability were 325*These figures can vary depending on the way disabilities are registered
Non-Irish national children  State of the Nations Children Report, 2012	1,440 representing 90.8 per 1,000 children in the county which is higher than the national average of 82.5 per 1,000 children in the State
Children in Lone Parent Households  State of the Nations Children	The number of children under 18 who live in family household units with only one parent or primary caregiver resident was 2,080 children in 2011 or 13.4% of the total child population. This is lower than the

Report 2012	national average of 18.3%
Parental education level  State of the Nations Children Report 2012	The number of children under 18 whose mother has attained (a) primary education was 500 children, (b) lower secondary education was 1,582 children, (c) upper secondary education was 6,634 children or (d) third-level education was 5,303. Roscommon has the third lowest percentage (3.5%) of children whose mothers have no formal education or primary education only in the Country
Traveller children- CSO	164 children, which is 10.2 per 1000 children in the County, compared to 12.4 per 1000 in the State.
Separated children seeking asylum	There are currently no separated children seeking asylum in Roscommon

Source CSO 2011

Research has demonstrated (EPPE, 2004) that children who attend a high quality ECCE service achieve better outcomes. This is particularly relevant in Roscommon where there are 500 children whose mother has only achieved primary education level. If you combine that with the mothers who have achieved lower secondary level then the figure reaches 2082 which is 3% of the overall population of county Roscommon.

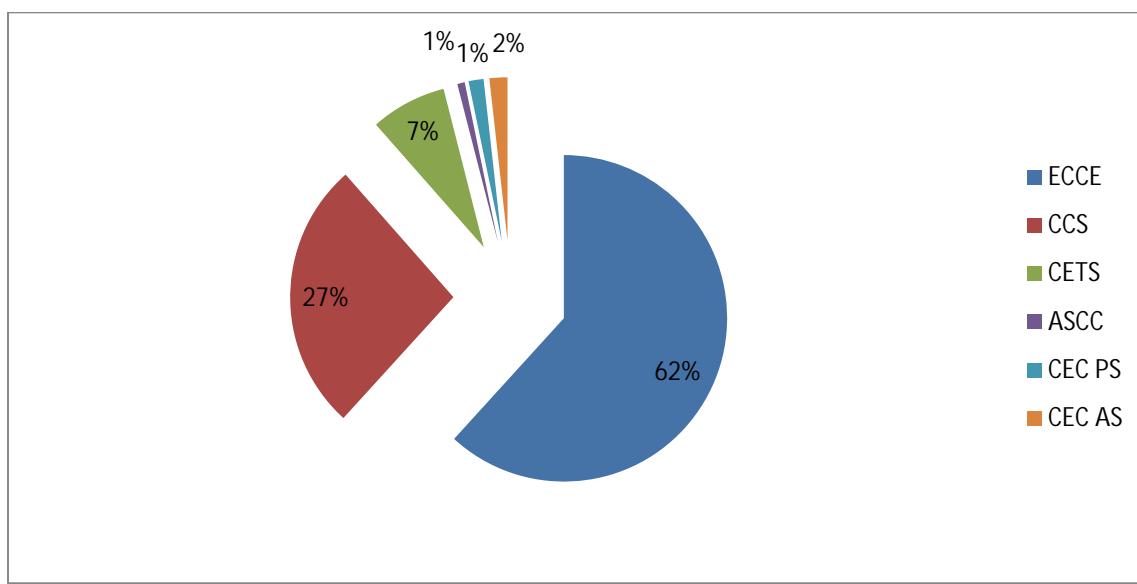
This combined with the higher than national average of non Irish National children, children with a disability and children from the Travelling community means there is a huge variety of needs to be addressed in the early years sector. There are currently 244 children from these backgrounds currently attending childcare services in Roscommon (RCCC Census, 2015) Therefore it is vital that Roscommon CCC continue to support childcare services in the provision of high quality ECCE.

## Disability & additional needs

In 2014 the number of children registered on the National Intellectual Disability Database in Roscommon was 165 and the number of children registered on the National Physical and Sensory Disability Database was 164. In September 2014, of the 767 school aged children with a Low Incidence Disability living in Roscommon, 474 of these children received their education in Primary Mainstream schools, 23 received their education in a primary special class for Autism/Autistic Spectrum Disorder and Specific Speech and Language Disorder, 128 in post primary mainstream schools and 6 in a post primary special class and 21 in a special school. In total there are 115 children with a Low Incidence Disability living in Roscommon at school in a county other than Roscommon.

Roscommon CCC have in conjunction with REIS/BoC developed the "Welcome to Pre-school Initiative" as a model of inclusion for children with additional needs in county Roscommon. In 2015 it has been implemented with 50 families in the county and Roscommon CCC will continue to implement and support families, children and childcare services in this manner in 2016.

The graph below shows the percentage of children in childcare in each of the childcare schemes. 62% of children attending childcare services are enrolled in the ECCE scheme, showing the importance of this scheme to parents and local employment in co Roscommon . A further 27% of children are enrolled in the CCS scheme further verifying that Roscommon is a county of relatively high deprivation. There are some areas in County Roscommon that do not have the CCS scheme including some areas of high deprivation such as Boyle and Arigna



Source RCCC 2015 Census

## Unemployment

In Roscommon there were 30,246 persons aged 15 years and over in the labour force and of these, 80.6 per cent (24,390 persons) were at work. The unemployment rate for this area was 19.4 per cent compared with a national average rate of 19.0 per cent. Of the 20,239 persons aged 15 years and over who were outside the labour force, 24.0 per cent were students, 25.6 per cent were looking after the home/family and 37.1 per cent were retired. Of the 24,390 workers enumerated in Roscommon, 8,534 worked outside the area. This higher than national average unemployment rate in Roscommon has demonstrated the importance of the CCS scheme to many parents in the County.

#### Traveller families by DED area in Roscommon

There were 396 Irish Travellers living in County Roscommon in 2011, an increase from 320 in 2005. 164 of these were children making the proportion of Traveller children in County Roscommon lower than the national average of 12.4 per 1,000 children in the State. The location of Traveller families in the County according to the Annual Count of November 2014 is as follows:

Roscommon Town and Environs	22
Athlone/Ballyforan	14
Tulsk/Strokestown	8
Ballaghaderreen	11
Castlerea/Castleplunkett/Frenchpark	22
Ballinlough/Cloonfad	3
Boyle/Carrick on Shannon	6
	86 families

Currently there are 18 children from the Travelling community attending ECCE services in Roscommon. This figure will vary from time to time due to the migratory factor associated with the Travelling community. Arising from Roscommon CCC involvement in the Traveller Interagency Group, the local agencies in County Roscommon are aware that some children may not be accessing the ECCE scheme and the Roscommon CCC have included this in the 2016 LIP to gather statistics/research and provide a collated response.

Roscommon CCC will endeavour to support Traveller families in 2016 and will collaborate with local agencies to maximise the potential of early year's education to improve outcomes for Traveller children and their families.

What is the local CCC perspective on sectoral demands/priorities?

The aforementioned statistics, indicates that the demand for childcare will continue to increase in specific localities. The current increase in migration will also highlight the importance of inclusive procedures and supports needed for second language acquisition and cultural diversity within the early year's sector. The development of the revised Diversity and Equality Guidelines for Childcare providers and the National Code of inclusive practice will address the need for generic supports and resources in this specific area of need. The further development of the multi lingual information packs to include new languages will provide relevant information on childcare funding and the type of services to support families during their transition period.

The announcement in the budget of additional resources in the area of special needs is welcomed and any capital or training programme that flows from this initiative will be supported by Roscommon CCC as part of the Better Start family during 2016

The minimum qualification requirement is a key priority for childcare staff, with a significant percentage continuing to complete their studies to meet the Sept 2016 deadline, currently there are 28 learner applicants are participating in the Learner Fund programme.

#### The Quality Agenda - Child Welfare & Well being

Roscommon County Childcare Committee is responsible for the implementation of the Early Childhood Care and Education Programmes on behalf of the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) and are the first point of contact for service providers seeking approval for childcare places under the various childcare programmes administered by the (DCYA).

Roscommon CCC staff attended the national NCCA practice guide workshop, and out of this delivered 28 cluster group meetings/workshops with a total of 152 participants and 51 services attending in 2015 to date. 25 services have requested support from Roscommon CCC on implementing Aistear in their services and 28 services have requested support from Roscommon CCC in implementing Siolta. Roscommon CCC will continue these cluster workshops into 2016 and also include one to one support visits to services for additional support with implementation.

CCCs have also established an Aistear/Siolta Practice Guide Working Group, in the aim to develop a consistent and coordinated approach to the delivery of training and information to services on the Aistear Siolta Practice Guide. This CCI working group are currently developing a generic workshop day for childcare service managers/owner. The workshop focuses on managing and implementing effective changes within the setting using the Aistear Siolta Practice Guide as a support tool. Services in general have welcomed the new Aistear Siolta practice guide as a useful resource support tool, however further training on the benefits and the use of reflective practice in the early years is needed. The cluster workshop model acts as a support network for reflective consultation and peer learning to occur.

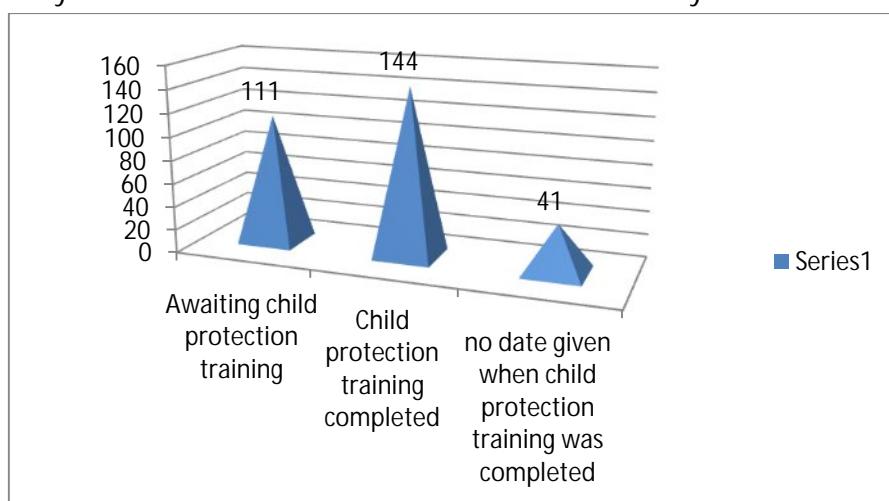
RCCC in collaboration with NCCA and Longford CCC have produced podcasts, some of which will accompany the Professional Practice material in the Aistear Síolta Practice Guide from NCCA due for circulation in late November 2015.

Currently Implementing:	Aistear	Síolta
Yes	29	24
No	0	1
Partly	11	14
Request 1-1 Support from RCCC	25	28

Source RCCC 2015 Census

### Child Protection & Welfare Training

Roscommon County Childcare Committee are also responsible at local level for the delivery of the National Early Years Child Protection and Welfare Training Programme designed specifically for the early year's sector. Roscommon County Childcare Committee has a countywide remit to provide a coordinated and strategic approach to the development of early childhood care and education services in County Roscommon.



Source RCCC 2015 Census

In addition to managing the company, its staff and operations, the Roscommon County Childcare Manager is also the Child Protection trainer for the sector locally which has been very worthwhile in terms of providing support to early year's educators in their duty to care for all children.

Roscommon CCC will continue roll out the Child Protection training and child protection policy development to services in 2016 as this has been identified as a National Priority

## Programme Implementation Platform (PIP)

Service providers have become more familiar with PIP however, there is still a significant level of support needed to ensure all services are engaging with the PIP system appropriately. This has required one to one support and consistent follow up and updates from Roscommon CCC to ensure services are meeting their contractual obligations via the PIP system. Competency with using the PIP system was further enhanced as services were supported by Roscommon CCC with ECCE, CCS & TEC registrations, making online funding applications and uploading fee policies onto PIP. The new system of approving and publishing the fee policies onto PIP generated additional work for Roscommon CCC staff. This was mainly due to the level of assistance needed to support services with uploading and inputting the correct information onto PIP. Roscommon CCC set up a system where services needing extra IT support were able to avail of on-site guidance to learn and gain greater competency with the PIP system. This support system was successful in helping services gain great capacity with the PIP and improved services IT skills to deal with future applications and registrations.

It should not be underestimated the amount of additional time and resources that Roscommon CCC dedicated to and continue to support services with during 2015 and we see that this trend will continue into 2016. Roscommon CCC reported on our experiences with PIP for services in our half yearly report and again through our case management meeting with Pobal and made the following recommendation.

## Training and Education Childcare Programmes (TEC)

Since September services have had the responsibility to complete their TEC registrations on PIP. Roscommon CCC delivered a TEC Tutorial workshop and have provided ongoing one to one support to assist services with the new registration process. 14 services attended the TEC Tutorial with 28 services in contract with TEC.

Roscommon CCC sent the following recommendations to Pobal in their midterm report

- Designated contact person for dealing with queries in relation to scheme assigned to each CCC.
- Clear remittance advice in relation to scheme as some services have had to pay additional fees to accountants to ensure they had received the correct payments
- Facility to add extension to programme by drop down menu on PIP
- TEC scheme opened to mature students returning to third level education

Sustainability remains to be a primary concern for some services due to possible displacement or duplication of services. This was also noted in the Roscommon

CCC mid-term report as an emerging trend and obstacle for existing services. Roscommon CCC Staff continue to work closely with services on issues related to governance, sustainability, staff development and staff appraisals.

### Gaps Identified

A gap in First aid and Manual Handling training provision was identified in the first half of 2015 through Roscommon CCCs annual census. There is also a gap in FETAC level 5 & 6 provision in the county. Roscommon CCC has collaborated with the county CE sponsor to provide three additional modules at level 6, this facilitated learner fun applicants as well as CE participants. This is an ongoing issue and one which Roscommon CCC will continue to offer support and guidance on to ensure those availing of the learner fund can access the appropriate training to meet the qualification requirements of the sector.

CCI advised the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) of the challenges in this regard and welcome the postponement of this requirement until September 2016 which now gives more time for services to meet the requirement and seek ways to ensure services long term viability. Roscommon CCC will continue to work with services to identify where there may be dependency on unqualified staff that could have consequences by September 2016 in relation to their sustainability. Roscommon CCC will support services to access Learner Fund 3 as regards to having all staff up to FETAC level 5. There may be additional pressure on services requiring an additional ECCE room leader to facilitate the expansion of the ECCE scheme as announced in the 2015 budget.

Work with the local colleges Athlone IT and Galway/Roscommon Educational Training Board (GRETB) and approved training providers delivering childcare qualifications are central to delivery of the department's policy (and indeed regulatory requirements) regarding qualifications in the sector, however capacity to deliver adequate training is an issue.

### Factors/influences affecting the work of the CCC

The ever increasing workload and scope of CCC work in the context of reduced funding remains to the forefront of the challenges faced by the Roscommon CCC. There is a finite number of hours that the staff can work within the constraints of the budget and despite a commendable level of adaptability and resourcefulness on the part of the team the fact remains that there is a limit to what can be delivered in the above context. The reduction of the Administrator role from full time to part time from January 2014 continues to have an impact. The Board and Management of Roscommon County Childcare Committee Ltd. has remained enthused with huge organisational and budget changes in 2014 and in to 2015.

Roscommon CCC's current Chairperson represents Tusla which ensures there is no duplication of work and allows for greater collaboration at local level.

A major step forward for the 2016 LIP is the list of clear DCYA Key Priorities. It means that at the outset of the year the company has a clearer 'service level agreement' for what is expected to be delivered for the funding it receives. This is a massive step forward in terms

of transparency, recognition and strategic planning. It should also ensure greater continuity of supports across the country whilst the CCC devised 'Levels' approach will allow a clearer picture to be drawn of the levels of support on offer to service and parents across the country and assist planning of supports both locally and nationally going forward.

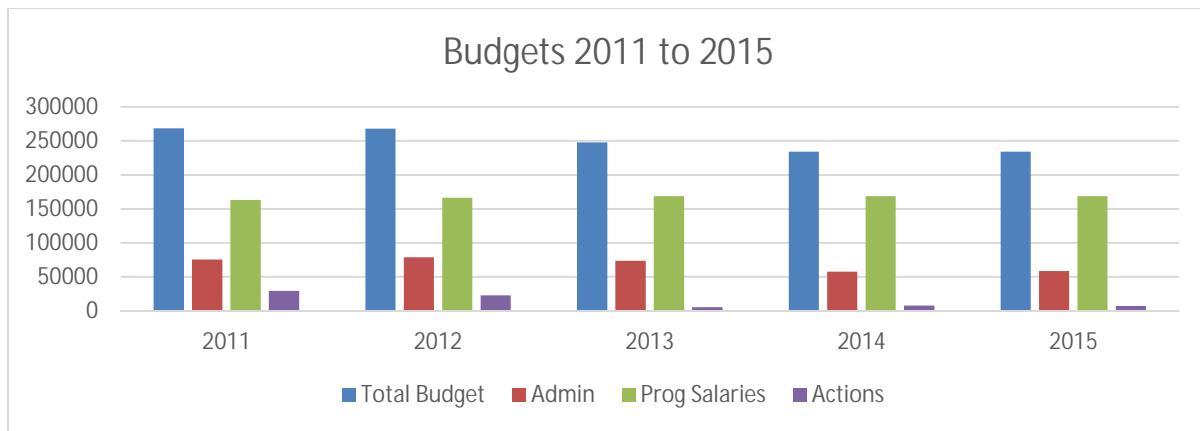
**Reduction in Administrator Hours** – Reduction in the RCCC budget meant a reduction in the Administrator's staff hours. RCCC advised Pobal and DCYA of the implications for RCCC regarding the reduction of the Administrators full time hours down to part time hours. The Administrator hours has been reduced to 21 hours from 20th January 2014 and is currently being implemented with external support.

The Roscommon CCC budget has been pared back to such an extent over the recent years that there is little if any room for delivery of any actions beyond those outlined in the DCYA's priority list, however Roscommon CCC has pursued a collaborative approach wherever possible in order to maximise value and to ensure maximum impact for our work to ensure best outcomes for children and families accessing the national childcare schemes. Some collaborations are policy driven, e.g. Participation in the local Children and Young People's Services Committee (CYPSC's) is outlined as an expectation in the Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures strategy manifesto as well as CYPSC's own blueprint policy document. Roscommon CCC is an active partner on the Roscommon CYPSC and have contributed to their plan. Other collaborations, whilst not strictly necessary are borne out of acute necessity e.g. the Department of Justice led Refugee Resettlement Group, Tusla's new Meitheal and other such structures have a direct impact on the lives of local children; many of whom require childcare and therefore an input from Roscommon CCC.

**Capital Funding to Roscommon CCC** - The capital funding Roscommon CCC received was welcomed as it provided the company with an opportunity to develop a training room in house and upgrade some of the IT equipment and signage. The in house training room has been a great use of office space for delivery of child protection training and quality support workshops and cluster meetings.

The following table and pie chart demonstrates the reductions in budgets for Roscommon CCC over the period 2011-2015

2011	€ 268,511
2012	€ 268,000
2013	€ 248,000
2014	€ 234,000
2015	€ 234,000



Source RCCC 2015

The delivery of actions during 2015 went smoothly enough with a number of highlights including the Aistear in Action Participation, Delivery of Child Protection & Welfare Training, Parent & Toddler grants, Childminder Development Grants, Continuing Professional Development day, publication of best practice podcasts and Capital funding applications to name a few.

Supporting sustainability was one of the key priorities in the second half of this year. In collaboration with Pobal, Roscommon CCC worked closely with services experiencing financial difficulties and support was prioritised for a small number of services who were at risk of closure. This work would be further enhanced if Roscommon CCC received the FIRs from Pobal in the month following submission by services.

Roscommon CCC worked closely with individual services especially community services to remain sustainable. Both community and private services were assisted with fee policies, financial returns and provided information related to governance, professional practice, leadership, Aistear/Siolta Practice guide, HR, governance and Company Law issues.

Staff time is committed to assisting and supporting services on immediate issues related to compliance, DCYA funding requirements, governance, HR, sustainability, training, curriculum planning and positive behaviour management. HR support is still an ongoing challenge for community services and will be part of support offered by Roscommon CCC in 2016.

There remains a lack of clarity regarding the vision for the Better Start initiative. From the outset the DCYA have been clear that the initiative has a sector wide scope; encompassing the CCCs, VCOs and the Better Start Early Years Quality Development Service. The latter service has been promoted widely by CCCs at local level. Roscommon CCC facilitated services in the county to apply to avail of the Early Years specialist Service under Better Start by organising an information night in collaboration with Co-ordinator for the region.

Roscommon CCC appointed a staff member as the contact person for the Early Years specialist service and sent out updates and information encouraging all services to access this support through the application process. In the first half of 2015 with the support of Roscommon CCC, 2 community and 1 private childcare service were referred by Roscommon CCC to the Early Years specialist Service for additional support. However, the Early Years specialist Service has chosen to work with only 2 of these services 1 community and 1 Private service. To date, Roscommon CCC have received limited feedback from the Early Years Specialist Service to date on progress with services referred by Roscommon CCC. Roscommon CCC are hopeful that a more collaborative national approach of the Better Start Family in 2016 will push the project onto greater success and that the necessary resources are found (see DCYA Priority List) to enable CCCs to execute Phase 2 of the project, which will assist the EYQDS with services who are more in need of their skills. With the amount of time spent supporting services with PIP and fees policies, onsite visits were curtailed, however Roscommon CCC hope that in 2016 services will be more accustomed to the online system thus freeing up more time for staff to conduct more onsite visits.

#### Concerns occupying head space

As services become accustomed to the online processes associated with the 3 national childcare programmes, Roscommon CCC will continue to provide a high level of support to ensure services meet their contractual obligations. In 2016 Roscommon CCC will aim to tailor the types of support provided to services to help increase their capacity to deal with new developments or changes under the DCYA funding programmes.

Roscommon CCC have responded promptly to ensure services receive the updates in relation to national developments and announcements related to the funding programmes, capital grants and the qualification requirements. The methods used to signpost important updates and disseminate information were via email, facebook, website quick links and responding to telephone queries. Roscommon CCC will enhance their website and face book page during 2016 to have an up to date visual information hub for parents, families, services and all stakeholders in the sector.

Parent's queries have risen dramatically since the budget announcement and there is confusion around eligibility for the second preschool year. Services are enrolling children without having approval on PIP which in one instance caused a great deal of additional liaison between Roscommon CCC, DCYA, Service and the Parent.

The proposed new education focused inspections from the Department of Education and Skills has reinforced the demand for further training and information on Aistear curriculum & Siolta standards for childcare services.

School Age Childcare – Roscommon CCC are conscious that the regulation of this sector will commence and with this in mind training and supports need to be planned accordingly. Accredited School Age Childcare training will now be planned for 2016 which did not commence in 2015 due to a number of other factors such as the work and demands with PIP and learner fund applicants.

The recent migration crisis will result in an increase in families participating in the Government's Refugee Programme in 2016. This may result in support being offered by Roscommon CCC to services, for instance it is envisaged that Ballaghaderreen is an area for relocation for these migrants and if this transpires additional support may be required. Multi-lingual information packs will be further updated to reflect the new languages that are spoken now as home languages in Ireland and to include relevant information about the types of services, childcare funding programmes and relevant support services for families.

Roscommon CCC will update the profile of the local sector through a mapping process liaising with Pobal and Roscommon County Council.

### Key priorities for 2016.

The following are priority areas of work for CCCs during 2016 as outlined by DCYA

DCYA Priorities 2016
<p>1. <u>Operations</u></p> <p>i Support the delivery and implementation of the three national childcare programmes (Early Childhood Care and Education Programme, Community Childcare Subvention Programme, Training and Employment Childcare Programmes), including any changes / extensions to these programmes and a review of fee payment policies.</p> <p>ii. Support the delivery and implementation of the Programmes for Implementation Platform, including the on-going development of the data infrastructure to inform the development of policy and programmes.</p> <p>iii. Support the delivery and implementation of the Early Years Capital Programme (if any), including the Childminding Development Grant and the Parent &amp; Toddler Group Grant.</p> <p>iv. Roll out service quality profiling (phase 1) via the Better Start System.</p> <p>v. Plan for the roll out of quality profiling (phase 2) via the Better Start System</p> <p>vi. Develop and implement internal governance arrangements, including financial management and human resource management.</p> <p>vii. Continuation of CCI, which will be resourced to provide a collective delivery, implementation and consultative body to the DCYA.</p> <p>viii. Communicate policy/regulation updates on behalf of DCYA to parents, services and stakeholders</p>

## 2. Quality

- i Provide ongoing support to providers (including childminders and Parent and Toddler Groups in accordance with the Better Start Model through the provision/promotion training and Continuing Professional development supports, quality supports, information and advice, sustainability and financial planning supports and through training eligible CCC staff as Siolta Mentors.
- ii. Develop a national information resource for service providers "Governance and Management of Early Years Services"
- iii. Provide on-going support to parents (e.g. information and advice)
- iv. Support the on-going delivery of the National Early years Children First Programme.
- v. Contribute to the roll out of Siolta QAP (including training of eligible CCC staff as Siolta Mentors and raising awareness of Siolta QAP and opportunities for services to gain validation).

## 3. Policy

- i. Contribute to the development of the Better Start Strategy/contribute to the work of the Better Start Strategy Steering Group
- ii. Undertake research and/or consultation to inform policy/programme development, where required
- iii. Support the delivery and implementation of the Early Years Strategy
- iv. Work collaboratively together with all other stake holder/initiatives/projects, nationally and (subject to availability of resources) locally (e.g. with the Area Base Poverty Initiative, the Child and Family Agency, the Children and Young Peoples Services committees, the early Years Specialist Service, the Health service Executive, the Inspectorate at the Department of Education and Skills, the National Early Years Inspectorate, the national Voluntary Childcare Organisations and Pobal, among others.
- v. Develop a complaints management system.

## 4. New Developments

- i. Support the delivery and implementation of actions arising from the Report of the Inter-departmental Group on Future Investment in Early Years and School-Aged Care and Education:
  - a) The administration of a Learner and to support Continuing Professional Development
  - b) The development of a national information resource for parents 'Choosing Childcare'
  - c) The development and implementation of a national system to enable non formal

- childminders to migrate from voluntary to mandatory requirements
  - d) Contribute to the working group who will develop quality standards for after-school and out-of-school-care
  - e) Contribute to the working group who will develop a single childcare support programme
- ii. Support the delivery and implementation of the model to support access to the ECCE Programme with children with a disability through
- a) The administration of a Learner Fund for designated Inclusion Officers
  - b) The development of revised diversity and Equality Guidelines for Childcare Providers, the development of a National Code of Inclusive Practice and a review and incremental roll out of the Equality and Diversity Programme.
  - c) The development of a national information resource for parents and providers 'ECCE Supports and Services for Children with a Disability'
- iii. Support providers to comply with forthcoming Childcare Regulation/National Quality Standards through:
- a) The administration of a learner Fund for all remaining unqualified staff
  - b) The development and implementation for a support plan for community-based early years services to address current dependency on Community, and
- Support the consultation on the National Quality Standards.

## 5. National Collaborative Projects

- i. Plan for the roll-out of service quality profiling (phase 2) via the Better Start System
- ii. The development of a national information resource for service providers 'Governance and Management of Early Years Services'
- iii. The development of a complaints management system
- iv. Contribute to the roll out of QAP (including training of eligible CCC staff as Siolta Mentors and raising awareness of Siolta QAP and opportunities for services to gain validation).
- v. The development of a national information resource for parents 'Choosing Childcare'.
- vi. The development and implementation of a national system to enable non formal childminders to migrate from voluntary to mandatory requirements.
- vii The development of a revised Diversity and Equality Guidelines for Childcare Providers, the development of a National Code of Inclusive Practice and a review and incremental roll of the Equality and Diversity Programme.
- viii. The development of a national information resource for parents and service providers 'ECCE Supports and Services for Children with a Disability'.
- ix. The development and implementation of a support plan for community –based early year's services to address current dependency on Community Employment

## Operational approach – manage its plan and the resources

### Corporate Governance

Roscommon CCC will use the 2016 Local Implementation Plan as its framework for planning and managing its operational work and the detailed programme of expenditure included in the LIP will be adhered to and monitored. Roscommon CCC operational priorities are led by the timeframes, rules and regulations set out by DCYA and Pobal. The Roscommon CCC staff will have a planning day in early January 2016 with priorities and individual work plans assigned. Roscommon CCC will continue to hold individual support and supervision with staff and staff team meetings where the work plan is reviewed. Staff contracts, job descriptions and responsibilities will be reviewed as an ongoing process reflecting the changing climate that CCCs work within.

Updates & correspondence from DCYA and Pobal will be discussed and priorities amended as required. The Board of Roscommon CCC will receive as an agenda item at board meetings a 2016 LIP progress report including finance. Roscommon CCC Board and Staff will regularly review the implementation of the LIP to ensure that the goals set out in the plan will be achieved by the end of the year including the risk assessment. Roscommon CCC will provide mid-year and year-end reports to DCYA and Pobal as required. Roscommon CCC will continue to provide 6-monthly financial returns to Pobal and will ensure that the financial procedures are in compliance with the requirements of Pobal verification visits and that Roscommon CCC's financial procedures are adhered to.

The board of Roscommon CCC have implemented its governance committee handbook and as an ongoing improvement process will in 2016, sign up to The Governance Code process following on from management attending training in the latter half of 2015. During the latter half of 2015, Roscommon CCC has successfully replaced a number of positions on the board that had become vacant due to retirements over recent years.

The focus of the Board throughout the first half of 2015 was to complete the process of restructuring initiated by the Allocations Framework Document and subsequent funding cuts. This included a complete review of staffing levels, roles and responsibilities, budgets, policies and procedures etc. The Executive & Finance Sub Committee met constantly throughout the process. The process resulted in the Administrator role being reduced to a three day week from January 2014 which was then referred to the Labour Relations Commission (LRC). While Roscommon CCC has endeavoured to finalise the process following the LRC recommendation, it is still ongoing and is taking considerable time to conclude.

RCCC Staff: The RCCC Staff team consists of a Manager F/T, Administrator P/T, 2 x F/T Childcare Development Officers.

The commitment, experience, governance and management of the company is reflected in the fact that a positive satisfaction rating of over 90% was reported by early years services in the Annual POBAL survey for the supports delivered by the CCC and by ongoing evaluations received from services through training/supports delivered.

RCCC Board: The following table lists the current composition of the Roscommon CCC board and officer roles.

Roscommon County Childcare Committee Board & Officers 2015		
Committee Member	Officer Role on Board	Representative Organisation
Georgina Kilcoyne	Chairperson Committee Member	TÚSLA/HSE
Breda Joyce	Vice Chairperson Director/Committee Member	Community Childcare Providers Representative
Bernadette Morris	Secretary Director/Committee Member	Department of Social Protection
Louise Ward	Treasurer Director/Committee Member	Roscommon County Council/Local Enterprise Office
Sinéad Devine	Staff Liaison Officer Director/Committee Member	Parent Representative
Martina Earley	Director/Committee Member	Roscommon Leader Partnership (RIDC)
Mary O' Connor	Director/Committee Member (To be ratified)	Roscommon Brothers of Charity
Sean Crehan	Director/Committee Member	Private Childcare Providers Representative
Kate Walshe	Monitoring Board Member	Voluntary Member
Catherine Cooney	Director/Committee Member (To be ratified)	Galway/Roscommon Education Training Board

Picture below shows Mary Mc Loughlin, DCYA and Fina Golden, Pobal visiting the offices of RCCC where they met with the board and staff of RCCC.



### Overview of progress

4 new services entered the DCYA/ ECCE/TEC funding programme for the 2015/16 programme call.

#### Supporting the delivery of the three national programmes (ECCE, CCS, TEC)

Roscommon CCC prioritised its workload to provide support and assistance to services on the DCYA funding programmes. 55 services participating in ECCE, 25 services participating in CCS & 28 services participating in TEC. The types of support provided to services was capacity building through in-office sessions, tutorials, telephone support and support visits. This level of support was increased for new services entering the programmes to ensure they were fully aware of their legal obligations.

Roscommon CCC supported services to prepare for their Pobal compliance visit, this included a sample action folder for services.

Recent updates to the Roscommon CCC website to include quick links, has enabled easier access to relevant information about DCYA programmes and new developments in the Early Years Sector.

#### Updates

During certain periods of the year, for example Budget time, Programme changes, Roscommon CCC have had to prioritise its work to ensure services receive important updates on national developments/announcements related to the funding programmes, capital grants and the qualification requirements. These unplanned events can often result in a significant amount of support needed to respond to service's individual queries.

#### Afterschool services – Quality Standards for After-School and Out-of-School Care

Sustainability remains to be a primary concern for some services due to displacement or duplication of services in specific localities.

A key issue identified this year was the setting up of new services on primary school grounds and the impact these types of services could have on the existing services in the surrounding area (budget 2015 & Afterschool services proposals). There is a level of uncertainty for childcare services due to new budgetary proposals for school age children and how this will impact on the afterschool services they provide. The actions that will arise from The Inter-Departmental group on Future Investment in Early Year and School –Aged Care and Education and in particular the development of Quality standards for after-school and out-of-school care will require Roscommon CCC to provide additional support to services providing this type of service. Roscommon CCC represented CCI on this Inter-departmental group in 2015.

Department of Education and Skills are issuing guidance to schools on the above issue and the drafting of the guidance is in process. The Minister for Department of Education and Skills also recently announced that she was establishing an Early Years Educator Advisory group. This group will agree and sign off on the guidance and the Competition and Consumer Protection Commission expects to be consulted as the drafting of the guidance progresses.

Roscommon CCC continue to provide a high level of support to services experiencing sustainability issues, to ensure that services remain open and recommend that any new service proposed should consult with their local CCC to avoid the issue of displacement.

#### Childminders & Parent & Toddler Group supports

Roscommon CCC will continue to provide support for childminders and Parent & Toddler groups including grant support and information and specific website updates operating in County Roscommon.

Roscommon CCC will endeavour to provide local supports to aid the development and implementation of a national system to enable non formal childminders to migrate from voluntary to mandatory requirements. CCI have developed a national response and Roscommon CCC will implement any national recommendations from DCYA on this sector.

#### Learner Fund – Learner Fund Round 3

Learner Fund Round 1 and 2 will continue to be managed. Roscommon CCC will provide information to services on Learner Fund Round 3 and will process and manage the applications in line with the funding criteria. The follow up involved with the Learner Fund programme has created additional work for Roscommon CCC staff.

## 2015 LIP Progress and Planning for 2016

A very detailed progress report is submitted bi-annually by Roscommon CCC and we are on target to meet all our stated objectives from our 2015 LIP following a case management meeting in the latter half of 2015 with Pobal.

In summary the positive highlights include:

- A much higher than average take up of capital grants by providers in the county
- Tangibly successful collaborative actions
- Successful delivery of our Always Children First commitments
- Early adoption of the NCCA's Aistear/Siolta Practice Guide and Roscommon CCCs initiative to produce podcasts to compliment the NCCA guide
- Strong participation rates by providers in Continuing Professional Development workshops
- Effective information dissemination through facebook, emails and website
- Recognition at national level of the "Welcome to Preschool Initiative" for support to children with disabilities in County Roscommon. The aim of the action is to ensure positive outcomes for children with Additional needs within County Roscommon. The action is based on a model of Inclusion thus implementing the Welcome to Preschool – Supporting Children with Additional Needs. By using this model it ensures there is a consistent approach between the three local agencies (BoC, REIS & RCCC) while working in partnership with the ECCE services and parents within the County.

Challenges which have informed the planning of our 2016 LIP include:

- The need to engage parents more effectively so they are fully informed of their entitlements under the national childcare schemes
- The need to incorporate more on-site visits
- The need to build a wider evidence base to ensure our supports are as targeted as possible
- The loss of funding for a dedicated childminding support position continues to have a detrimental effect on the participation and engagement levels of childminders.
- The reduction in funding to Roscommon CCC and its implications
- The need to compile an up to date profile of the sector in County Roscommon
- The need to support community services who wish to sign up to the code of governance process
- The capacity of local training providers to deliver accredited training in accessible county wide locations

- School Age Childcare training, Support for ethnic minorities to access ECCE and Quality mentoring and training/workshops identified through the 2015 census
- PIP
- Learner fund

#### Risk Assessment

The Roscommon CCC Risk Assessment Template is attached as a separate document

#### Conclusion

Roscommon CCC key priority for 2015 was supporting services to meet their contractual obligations with DCYA and Pobal, with particular emphasis on assisting services with their capacity to engage with PIP. Roscommon CCC's administration of the TEC Programme ensured all applications were processed and services and families were provided with accurate information and support in relation to the eligibility criteria and application process. A support system to assist services was delivered in the form of tutorials, email updates and one to one support sessions to assist childcare providers to become proficient with the new registration process and update their IT skills.

As the Learner Fund progresses, Roscommon CCC continue to follow up with the learner applicants and training providers to ensure Learners are supported to complete their studies in time to meet the qualification requirements for September 2016.

The high attendance at cluster group sessions on the Aistear/Siolta practice guide has demonstrated a need for further information and ongoing in-service training on quality, compliance, sustainability, governance and professional practice. The cluster group model has proved to be more effective than the larger network meeting format, this is due to the shared learning experience, peer support, follow up meetings and support visits. The established Cluster workshop will be further enhanced by the proposed roll out of the generic workshop designed for managers and developed by the CCCs practice guide workshop.

Roscommon CCC will endeavour to continue to provide support to services to ensure they meet their contractual requirements under the PIP system

ROSCOMMON CCC is looking forward to working collaboratively with DCYA, Pobal, Tusla, DES, CCI, Better Start, and Roscommon CCC board members to ensure services receive consistent and updated information on new developments on the DCYA funding programmes and for the early years sector in general. Roscommon CCC will continue to provide local quality support services to facilitate capacity building for childcare providers to meet their contractual obligations under the 3 national funding programme and relevant legislative requirements