

Wexford County Childcare Committee

Local Implementation Plan 2016

End of Year Report



An Roinn Leanaí
agus Gnóthaí Óige
Department of
Children and Youth Affairs



pobal

government supporting communities

Table of Contents

Section 1 – Introduction	P03
Section 2 - Background to Wexford County Childcare Committee	P03
Section 3 – Organisation, Operations and Delivery	P04
Section 4 – Priorities	P06
Section 5 – Impacts on Work for 2016	P09
Section 6 – Supplementary Actions	P10
Section 7 – Performance of 2016 LIP	P13
Section 8 – Conclusion	P18

WxCCC's 2016 Local Implementation Plan

Introduction to CCC 2016 Local Implementation Plans and Standard Programmatic Activity

Section 1 – Introduction

This document will provide the narrative insight into the Local Implementation Plan for Wexford County Childcare Committee (WxCCC) for 2016. It will begin by presenting the background to WxCCC before moving on to explore the structures in place that enable WxCCC to manage and deliver on its key priority areas of work. This document will then set the context for the 2016 LIP before addressing highlights, challenges and unforeseen occurrences during the lifespan of the plan. Within this framework WxCCC will detail areas of reprioritization, the impact of its actions, and any new trends/emerging patterns observed, culminating in a conclusion.

Section 2 - Background to Wexford County Childcare Committee

Profile

WxCCC was one of the 33 City and County Childcare Committees set up in 2001, as part of National Childcare Policy to co-ordinate the development of childcare locally.

Ethos and Core Principles

WxCCC ethos is to pursue a consultative approach to achieve effective coordination of quality childcare services in Co.Wexford. The core principles that guide the overall approach from WxCCC are outlined below.

- The needs and rights of all children and their families will be respected and inform all of WxCCC's actions.
- WxCCC will deliver a quality strategy that supports the holistic development and well-being of all children.
- WxCCC will endeavour to promote and support equality of access and participation to affordable, quality and inclusive childcare for all children and their families.
- WxCCC will promote a family friendly approach to childcare and work towards extending the level of choice available to parents/guardians.

Section 3 – Organisation, Operations and Delivery

Organisation

WxCCC experienced several staffing changes in 2016 due to three maternity leaves and a long term sick leave. WxCCC made the post of Childminding Coordinator redundant on June 24th 2016. Due to additional funding to support the roll out of the Access and Inclusion model (AIM) WxCCC recruited a Development Officer on a fixed term three-month contract for 28 hours per week. This post enabled WxCCC to backfill another staff members position to lead on the AIM roll out on behalf of WxCCC.

Until October 2016 there were a total of eight members on the Board of WxCCC, however one long standing Director retired their position in October 2016, and 2 additional members joined the board at the beginning of December. The extent of local partnership involved in WxCCC's work is clearly evidenced by the wide-ranging membership profile of the committee.

In relation to organisation, the functions of the Board are outlined below.

- Advising and assisting the CEO in formulating and achieving the company's mission.
- Ensuring compliance with corporate governance requirements.
- Approving annual budgets for the company and ensuring appropriate accountability for the disbursement and management of these budgets.
- Providing annual and ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the activities of WxCCC.

In relation to the organisation of staff, the CEO's role is the management of staff, the management and delivery of quality services, and the planning of a coordinated approach to the development and implementation of WxCCC Local Implementation Plan (LIP), as directed by the Board of WxCCC.

Board

WxCCC has established Sub-Committees who act on behalf of the Board which consist of a HR Sub-Committee, a Finance Sub-Committee and a Childminding/P&T Grant Sub-Committee. WxCCC has created a Governance Sub-Committee to support its Governance Code Journey. Wexford CCC will continue to work towards full implementation of the Governance Code going forward into 2017.

Delivery

In relation to the delivery of the actions under the LIP, the role of the staff team is outlined below.

The ***Development Officers*** role overall is to provide information, support and advice on all aspects connected with the early year's landscape. A significant element of the role involves supporting the three national programmes ECCE, CCS and TEC. Supporting providers to engage with same, particularly through the online platform 'PIP', forms a core element of the Development Officer's role. Constant engagement with providers both informally and formally and identifying their needs enables the Development Officers to inform the development and direction of WxCCC's local implementation plans. The role also entails providing in-service training, governance and mentoring support, and supporting general best practice in the sector.

The ***Childminding Coordinator's*** role was to provide information, training and support to both existing and potential Childminders in County Wexford. In lieu of changes to priorities and increased demands in other development areas, WxCCC made this post redundant on June 24th 2016. For the latter half of 2016 WxCCC revised its delivery of Childminding supports from Level 3 to Level 1.

The ***Administrator's*** role is to act as the primary contact for WxCCC. The role involves keeping abreast of current developments in the sector, and signposting clients to the information they require. The role mirrors some elements of a public relations officer. WxCCC's experience is that providers want instant online access to information, particularly when they are engaged in professional development, so the library became under used. A decision was taken in early 2016 to close the library and the books were donated to IT Carlow Wexford Campus who gratefully received them. A large element of administrator's role involves maintaining the WxCCC website, and WxCCC social media outlets to ensure providers are getting access to the information they need particularly around the national programmes, and latest events in the sector. The administrator's role also involves informing the development of the WxCCC LIP through engagement with WxCCC's clients, and organizing and administering any professional development courses that WxCCC offer.

The ***Financial Administrator's*** role is to manage the company's payroll and finances, and to maintain the administrative systems and structures of the company. The Financial Administrator also gives administrative assistance and support to all staff members.

Section 4 – Priorities

Local Context

In 2013, CCC's were directed by DCYA to discontinue several organic actions individual to many CCC's at local level, in favour of a more cohesive, streamlined and collaborative national approach. WxCCC has designed its work for 2016 around the DCYA Key Priorities for 2016; Operations, Quality, Policy, New Developments and National Collaborative Projects. An account of these actions can be found in 2016 the Report by Implementation Plan. It is evident that a change in national context directly impacts on work in a local context. In 2016 there were developments (detailed in the paragraphs to follow) that impacted on the delivery of WxCCC's LIP 2016 as they were additional to the work set out.

Per the Pobal Early Years Sector Profile 2015/2016 Report there are a total of 135 services in receipt of Programme funding in Wexford, and a total of 5350 children registered under these programmes. The largest cohort registered under the programmes was the 3-4.5 year age group at 2300. The most significant area of enrollment is in sessional care (mornings) which is at 44%, and there is a reported 10% in full daycare. There were two service closures in 2016 both services were operating on a sessional basis. 45 Services were awarded funding under the Early Years Capital 2016 Programme, initiated solely to increase the number of ECCE places nationally.

Regional Context

The functions and roles of the Committees are aligned to support the implementation of national policy at a local level. In addition, CCC's play a key coordinating role and are actively involved in various co-ordinating bodies who support the delivery of supports to Children & Families. This includes Children & Young People Services Committees and Local Community Development Committees. As the established local delivery structure for the Early Years, CCCs play a crucial role in supporting the development of the Early Years sector in each County responding to local needs and implementing comprehensive support plans to address these needs. This has been a core function of the CCCs since their establishment. Over the last 15 years the CCCs have been at the centre of these supports and development within the sector (CCI, 2015).

National Context

WxCCC is member of Childcare Committee Ireland (CCI) a national network for all Childcare Committees.

CCI continues to develop and is an effective communication point for CCCs to discuss issues and develop ideas with DCYA, Tusla and Pobal. The group has worked very closely with DCYA, Tusla & Pobal on a range of activities in 2016 including:

- PIP- CCI were actively involved in the continued development the new Programme Implementation Platform (PIP) for services, to include a new online system for programme contracting and fees development.
- Learner Fund - Consultation with DCYA & Pobal ensured the effective delivery of the programme to learners and training providers.
- Better Start - Input and recommendations given at CCI level to support the National Quality Support Service development.
- Access & Inclusion model – CCI members were directly involved in the development of the model and supported CCC' to roll it out nationally
- CE Review – CCI led a national review on behalf of DCYA on the impact the qualification requirement under the new Child Care Regulations (the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016) would have on community services with CE staff.
- Child Care Regulations (the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016)- CCI are actively involved with Tusla to ensure a cohesive and streamlined approach for early years' providers around engagement the new preschool regulations.

CCI Representation

CCC's are represented at national level on relevant task groups and forums to include:

Tusla

Longford CCC sits on the National Early Years Inspectorate Consultation Forum on behalf of CCI. There have been 8 meetings in 2016. Membership of the group include Department of Children and Youth Affairs, Childminding Ireland, Early Childhood Ireland, Barnardos, Gaelscoileanna, City/County Childcare Committees, Plé, National Disability Authority, St. Nicholas Montessori College and Túsula. During 2016 the meetings were primarily focused around information provision from Túsula to other stakeholders. During 2016, CCI supported Túsula with the administrative registration process of services using the statutory declaration

form and supported information roadshows nationally in preparation for the implementation of the Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

CCI liaised with Túsła regarding the necessary support structure needed for Early Years Services regarding the implementation of the new regulations and put a proposal to DCYA concerning same. CCI have continued to highlight concerns and queries arising from the new regulations both those identified by CCC staff and Early Years providers to Túsła and then reverting to the sector with clarity when possible. This in turn has supported the Frequently Asked Questions document produced by Túsła. This communication mechanism has enabled CCCs as the local source of information/support a means to obtaining clarification in a timely fashion while giving Túsła a degree of separation to uphold their statutory role of inspection. The absence of the Quality and Regulation Framework (QRF), the guidance document to assist Early Years services to comply with the regulations, is creating uncertainty within the sector which is evident by the level of queries CCCs are experiencing nationally. It is envisaged that the QRF consultation process will commence in early 2017 which is hoped will give the clarity needed for Early Years services and those supporting them, however, it is imperative that an appropriate communication and support system is in place to ensure correct interpretation of same.

Working group for Reforms and Supports of the Childminding Sector

Cavan CCC sits of the Working group for Reforms and Supports of the Childminding Sector on behalf of CCI. There have been 3 meetings in 2016. Membership of the group include Childminding Ireland (Chair), Department of Children and Youth Affairs, Childminders representative, Better Start, The National Voluntary Childcare Organisation Collaborative, City/County Childcare Committees, Academic representative, Children's Rights Alliance, Pobal and Tusla.

The terms of reference are as follows: Using research and consultation as required, drawing on international best practice, and acting at all times in the best interests of children –

- Examine the feasibility and implications of the migration from voluntary to mandatory regulation for the childminding sector
- In the short term, identify the reforms and supports that are required to have a robust system of quality assurance for childminders

- Make proposals for, and cost where appropriate, a model of reforms and supports for the childminding sector in the short (1-3 years) term, medium (3-5 years) and long (5-10 years) term
- Provide a description of the childminding sector in Ireland, including all the different categories of childminders and, where possible, the estimated number in each category. Make recommendations in respect of which categories should be included in plans for reform and support of the sector, and – if necessary - provide a rationale for excluding others

CCI has completed 2 presentations to the Working group on CCI stance on Reforms and Supports required to date. The working group time frame is until approximately the second quarter of 2017, whereby recommendations will be made.

Section 5 - Impacts on Work for 2016

Board and Staffing

WxCCC has been fortunate to retain the same core staff team on a long-term basis, however during 2016 there were some staffing changes due to three maternity leaves and a long term sick leave. Every effort was made to maintain service delivery even with a decreased staff team particularly during the months of January to March and June to October.

This issue had potential implications for service delivery during an extremely busy time in terms of the requirements of the 3 national programmes, PIP support, the introduction of the Access and Inclusion Mode and processing of parent and toddler and Childminder development grants. The existing team are to be commended in terms of their dedication to maintaining service delivery, team members worked out of hours to ensure the level of provider support at an extremely busy time was not affected. This level of working on a long term basis however is not sustainable or equitable on the staff team. Staffing levels returned to normal from October. Staffing the development team at critical times will remain a priority going forward so that provider support is maintained at its current high level.

WxCCC Office Move

WxCCC moved offices in April 2016 to the local Community and Enterprise Centre in Enniscorthy. The impetus for the move was mainly monetary. The move to the new premises was a large undertaking as WxCCC occupied a 3 floor 10 room building, and moved to a 3-room office space. A large archiving exercise took place to space save for the move. This was a significant undertaking and took up a large proportion of the administrator and CEO's role in the lead up to the move. The WxCCC staff team, are to be commended on their support and assistance with the move particularly as the full cohort of staff was not present.

Childminding Supports

Due to the post of Childminder Coordinator being made redundant mid-year, the level of support given to Childminders in Wexford has been revised from a level 3 to level 1 due to an already understaffed team. Going forward into 2017 WxCCC has agreed to engage with Tusla registered Childminders or those in the process of registering. WxCCC is also open to working under the recommendations of the Working group for Reforms and Supports of the Childminding Sector.

Section 6 - Supplementary Actions

Level 7

Building on the success of the BA in Applied Early Childhood Education & Care – Level 7 in the Carlow region, WxCCC were actively involved in attempts to bring the programme to the Wexford Campus. Collaboration between WxCCC, IT Carlow Wexford Campus and Skillnets meant that the programme came to fruition. Skillnets agreed to subsidise each of the 18 places by €500. An information evening was held in April with a turnout of over 100 people. WxCCC supported the Campus with the application process, shortlisting and interview process and there were many queries to the office. A cohort of 20 students commenced the Programme in September 2016. This ultimately will improve the quality of early years service provision to children and families in Wexford with whom these practitioners are working, in addition to increased financial sustainability as the practitioners may attract higher capitation payments to their service upon completion of their study. There are 623 staff working in services in Wexford, the majority are qualified to levels 5 and 6 (Level 5 –

197, Level 6 – 211). A lesser number are qualified to levels 7 and 8 (Level 7 – 22, Level 8 – 79), this also highlights the necessity for programmes like the BA in Applied Early Childhood Education & Care – Level 7 to be made available to the sector (Pobal Early Years Sector Profile 2015/2016 Report)

Storytime Express

WxCCC is particularly proud of its involvement and collaboration with Wexford Library services. Originally the collaboration was to roll out the Ready to Read Programme, however the action was amended to support the roll out of Story time express. Story time Express was developed to give children access to library services particularly in rural areas. 30 preschools are currently signed up to the programme whereby the mobile library visits the individual service for story time, overall literacy development and promotion of the library services. Feedback from providers has been extremely positive with great excitement from the children to see the bus arrive at their service.

2016 Stakeholder Survey

During the fourth quarter of 2016, a consultation process was undertaken with the sector by way of a service user survey. For the purposes of the survey, WxCCC engaged the services of Bofin Consultancy, a Wexford based company which specialises in market research activities. The outsourcing of the research process to a third party organisation ensured total respondent confidentiality, which may be considered to increase the legitimacy of feedback received through the survey.

The survey achieved a 41.3% response rate from service providers, with a small number of additional responses from early years practitioners. All respondents surveyed have engaged the services of WxCCC during the past year, 96.5% of these occasionally to frequently. Most providers (82.5%) continue to contact via phone and want to discuss their issue verbally – this draws attention to the importance of having DO's available to answer phone queries. Satisfaction levels from respondents are high with 92.8% satisfied or very satisfied with services from WxCCC. There was no reported dissatisfaction among respondents.

Two-thirds of respondents report visiting the website bi-monthly or less frequently, however, a vast majority (66%) of respondents indicated a preference to receive information from WxCCC through Facebook. This may facilitate promotion of the website by linking directly to the website content from social media accounts. Providers also indicated their preferences in

terms of training and continuing professional development which will be provided for in the actions of 2017.

Child Care Regulations (the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016)

The introduction of the Child Care Regulations (the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016) in June 2016 was unexpected within the sector. CCC's as directed by CCI provided information to the sector particularly around re-registering their services. The introduction of the revised regulations came at a time when services were extremely busy with Programme requirements and the introduction of the Access and Inclusion Model.

AIM

From the inception of the Access and Inclusion Model to year end, WxCCC recorded 660 instances of supports. This was an additional workload outside of the submitted LIP. WxCCC received additional funding to support the roll out of the model, this funding was prioritized to backfill a Development Officer post to lead on the project on behalf of WxCCC. WxCCC also established a Hot Desk in its offices to support providers to make applications under AIM and other areas of PIP.

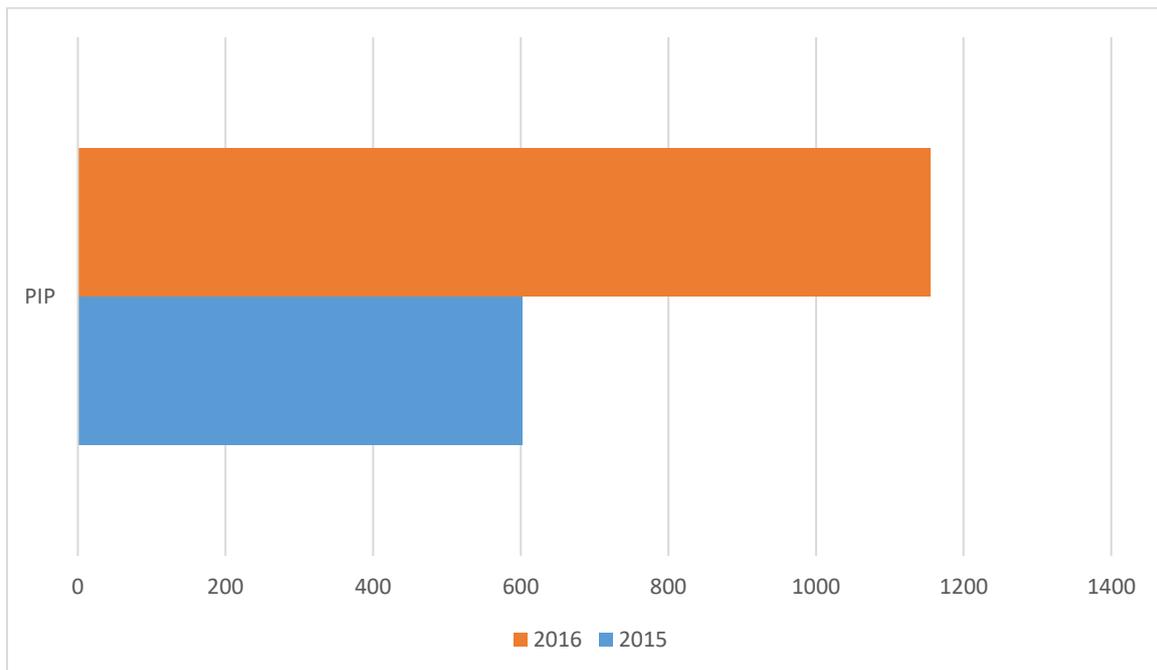
Section 7 - Performance of 2016 LIP

Highlights

Programme Support

A particular highlight for WxCCC is as always its positive relationship with its stakeholders. Instances of support with regard to the 3 national programmes continues to rise demonstrating provider's reliance on WxCCC to provide them with support and information. Support on a one to one basis via phone and email continues to remain high. Support regarding PIP has increased from 602 instances in 2015 to 1155 in 2016, highlighted visually below. Support regarding PIP continues to increase due to Programme contractual requirements, services having to confirm their Primary Authorized user, fee policy development and submission of AIM applications.

Instances of PIP Support 2015 vs 2016.



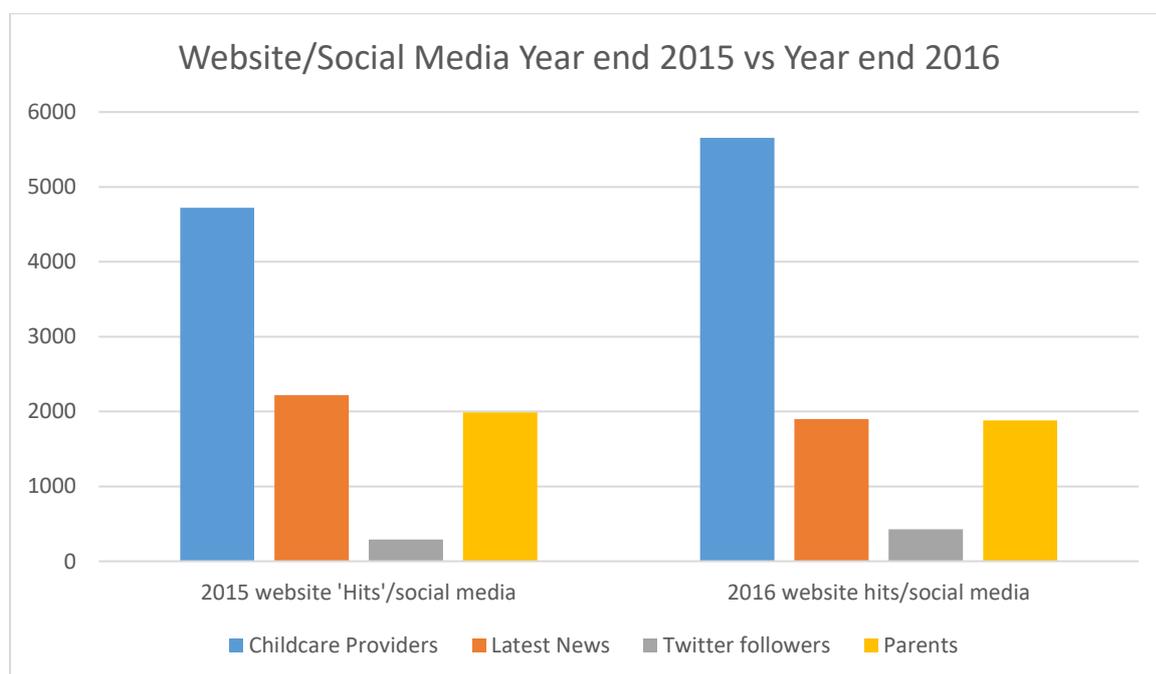
Grant Support

Support to providers around the Early year's capital programme was high during the application period at 293 instances of support.

WxCCC received 9 Childminder Development grants & 17 parent and toddler grants. Eight childminders were awarded funding and 14 parent and toddler groups also received funding.

Engaging with Stakeholders

WxCCC's website and social media outlets continue to go from strength to strength with increased social media followers, and increased 'hits' overall on the WxCCC website. There was a total of 20056 hits on the site in 2016 compared to 18682 in 2015. The chart below outlines the steady rise in 'hits' on the childcare provider's page (contains all programme information). As previously stated in section 3, the administrator's role has changed to meet the communication needs of WxCCC's stakeholders, which is proving to be via an online platform.



- ***Analytics for August 2016 were unavailable due to WxCCC changeover***

Continuous professional development (CPD)

Continuous professional development (CPD) remains high on the agenda for Wexford providers, particularly accredited training. A significant proportion of providers are currently engaged in training at Levels 5, 6 and 7 & 8 to meet programme requirements, therefore CPD courses rolled out by WxCCC must be worthwhile and relevant for providers to attend. First Aid and Manual handling are in-demand, therefore 2 First Aid, 1 Food Safety and 1 Manual Handling programme were rolled out and booked to capacity.

Two workshops entitled 'Emotional Literacy' and 'Mindfulness & Wellbeing of the Child' were also rolled out. The first was facilitated by Michelle Hart of the National Childhood Network, and the second by Peadar Maxwell HSE psychologist. 42 attended the emotional literacy

workshop and 30 attended the Mindfulness workshop. The Satisfaction rating was 7 or higher for all training.

Learner Fund

Changes to the staffing requirements of the early year's sector mean that from December 2016, the pre-school leaders in all services participating in the ECCE programme will be required to hold a certification for a major award in childcare/early education at a minimum of level 6 on the NFQ, and all staff working with children in the service will be required to hold a certification for a major award in the childcare/early education at a minimum of level 5 on the NFQ. Because of this requirement early years' staff have had the opportunity to apply for subsidized accredited training through the National Learner Fund. For some participants they have made a return to education after a number of years, a transition that can have many challenges. In 2016 WxCCC have provided support to providers to address this challenge and support meaningful engagement with their training programme. Under Learner Fund 2, three learners were deemed eligible and under Learner Fund 4 17 were deemed eligible and 1 has since withdrawn.

Child Protection

Children First training continues to be in high demand with 72 participants being trained in 2016. WxCCC has two staff members who are CF trainers however both were on maternity leave in 2016, therefore another trainer in the Wexford area delivered training to meet the need. As part of the quality control measure of the programme one of the Development Officers and the external trainer were monitored during the delivery of one of their trainings in 2016 and were subsequently deemed suitable to carry on the training. From the commencement of 2014 to the end of 2016 WxCCC had delivered training to personnel from 108 services with 30 services remaining. These services will be further targeted in 2017.

Quality

Support in the context of 'quality' is broad ranging and encompasses many aspects, including but not limited to, Siolta, Aistear, the introduction of the Child Care Regulations (the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016), the Dept. of Education and Skills Early-years Education-focused Inspection (EYEI), qualification requirements, Better Start Access and support and the commencement of the Children First Act 2015. 1478 instances of 'quality' support were recorded in 2016.

One WxCCC staff member has undertaken training as a Siolta mentor and this training will be utilized with providers on the ground in the context of the 2017 LIP.

WxCCC continues its engagement with the the Better Start Quality Development Service (QDS) and feedback from services on the ground is positive.

Sustainability

Overall WxCCC provided 73 instances of governance support to community providers. A particular highlight for WxCCC is seeing the governance capacity of these services growing, and the process of fee policy development becoming embedded in their practice which impacts hugely on services sustainability.

WxCCC has had 2 case management meetings with Pobal, 3 services were identified as in critical need of governance related support. One of the services was supported by a well-established community service and the other 2 have had targeted CCC support. Both services have also engaged in the CE sustainability exercise which has been useful in supporting the services sustainability. WxCCC continues to support both services, one receives regular support as the service was at one point fearing closure.

Collaboration

Childcare Committees Ireland (CCI) continues to go from strength to strength, and continues to solidify its relationship as the primary contact for CCC's with DCYA, Tusla and Pobal. CCI representatives are active members of the AIM working groups at all levels, and negotiated additional resources for CCCs for support the roll out of AIM. Other work is detailed in Section 4.

WxCCC is well represented locally and an active member of Children and Young Peoples Services Committee. WxCCC also has representation on 3 of its sub groups and is an active participant in the development of the Wexford Children and Young Peoples Plan. WxCCC has a lead role in a number of actions within the plan.

WxCCC also has a place on the Healthy Ireland-Smart Start programme group and is currently liaising with the group around adapting the programme into a taster session for parents which will form part of the Children and Young Peoples Plan.

New Developments

The introduction of the Access and Inclusion model is most welcomed within the early years sector and feedback on the ground has been most positive. WxCCC looks forward to engaging with the model and supporting providers re: same again in 2017.

Challenges/Unplanned Occurrences

Programme Support

Introduction of the CCS P programme whilst ultimately welcomed increased the workload of the CCC. The scheme itself is quite intricate and takes time to understand, so private providers required significant support to understand the scheme, in the form of one-to-one information sharing, in order to decide if the scheme was worthwhile entering into.

The introduction of the Access and Inclusion model, whilst timely and most welcomed, was a challenge to promote due to the time of year it was launched. ECCE providers were winding down for the summer months at the time, with the vast majority on unpaid leave until September. There was a low turn out to WxCCC's information workshops with only 15 providers attending in total, therefore WxCCC has utilized its social media and online outlets to disseminate the information.

In relation to the Better Start Quality Development Service, WxCCC receives each final report before it is submitted to the service for review, as most of the recommendations require WxCCC support to the service. This is another element of 'unforeseen' work to be provided by WxCCC which WxCCC may or may not be able to provide due to the limitations of its Local Implementation Plan.

Overall the main issue for the CCC is the unplanned or unforeseen issues that arise within the lifespan of the Local Implementation Plan including but not limited to, the launch of AIM, the new re-contracting process for services in terms of PIP Primary Authorised Users and the new fee policy development element of PIP. A considerable amount of CCC resources are expended on this work which was not accounted for or outlined in WxCCC's LIP. Again, there is a call for increased flexibility within the formulation of the LIP to allow for unforeseen issues, so that the CCC can address these issues effectively as they arise, and have sufficient resources to do so.

There is a direct correlation between the introduction of new tasks and processes (even where they are an improvement to the systems they replace) and the workload to CCC staff. With regard to all of the above developments, the CCC was relied on heavily by services to navigate them through the processes for the first time. It could also be argued that not all such changes were necessary, given the upcoming significant change in 2017 with the proposed introduction of the Single Affordable Childcare scheme replacing the now seven strands of non-ECCE childcare supports (CETS, ASCC, CEC, CCS, CCSP, CCSR, CCSH) (Wickow CCC, 2016).

Section 8 - Conclusion

WxCCC will use this section to conclude its commentary on activity for the reporting period. Again in 2016, the need for WxCCC to work with limited resources, although challenging, has resulted in greater efficiencies and positive outcomes for staff who have willingly expanded their roles to include additional tasks/actions. Contact from providers is increasing steadily and the need for online support and information is also consistently increasing. This level of commitment and flexibility amongst the staff team continues to be one of WxCCC's greatest assets and is well recognized and acknowledged at Board level. However, none of this would be possible without the trust, commitment and leadership of the Board.

With increased responsibility being placed on providers, often with very little lead-in time, supports from the CCC, through social media and online resources and on a one to one, cluster group and networking basis, will continue to be paramount moving forward 2017. In addition bringing the issues providers are facing to the national platform via CCI is paramount to supporting their needs. Providers have had increased responsibility and administration without monetary support for out of hours work built into the Programmes up until the announcement of non-contact time payment in budget 2017. It is as yet unknown when this additional payment may come into effect. Communicating these issues continues to form a core element of WxCCC's work.

It is clear from the report that issues of sustainability are present in some services. Where WxCCC cannot support providers due to the issue being outside of their remit, WxCCC will continue to prioritize free one-to-one mentoring sessions to targeted services with an appropriate business consultant.

Thus far, 2016 has been a period of immense uncertainty and change for childcare providers. In addition to facing sustainability issues, providers now also face challenges including those listed below, but not limited to:

- Inspection reports and responses to same being published and made available on line.
- Stringent recruitment practices.
- Forthcoming National Early Years Strategy
- Siolta
- Aistear
- The introduction of the Child Care Regulations (the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016)
- The Dept. of Education and Skills Early-years Education-focused Inspection (EYEI), qualification requirements
- The commencement of the Children First Act 2015,
- The introduction of the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM),
- PIP
- Requirements under the three national programmes.

Following huge changes within the sector over the course of 2016, further enormous change is anticipated with the introduction of a new single affordable childcare scheme to be rolled out in September 2017. This will effectively replace all existing DCYA programmes apart from ECCE. It is envisaged providers will require a very high level of support from WxCCC during this process over the coming year. WxCCC is positive that it can respond to the needs of the sector, as experience has shown that CCC's are extremely adaptable and capable of responding to change. WxCCC feels that it has fulfilled its obligations within the 2016 LIP with regular reviews and monitoring taking place within its lifespan, and looks forward with enthusiasm to supporting the sector over the coming year and the implementation of LIP 2017.