



30<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Dear Provider and sector representative,

Thank you for your continued patience as we develop fuller detail on the measures we announced for the Early Learning and Care and School Age Childcare Sector on Tuesday.

Please find attached a 'Frequently Asked Questions' document regarding the Government's new Wage Subsidy Scheme for the Childcare Sector. The FAQs endeavour to provide details on what the Scheme means for you as a provider, the qualifying criteria for the Scheme, and the operational procedures on how the Scheme will be rolled out.

Information relating to the Scheme is still evolving and accordingly the FAQs will be updated as additional information becomes available.

I appreciate how difficult it is for you all at this time. I am grateful for all of the messages myself and my Department have received from employees of the sector. It is important to hear about how these measures can help retain Educators in their much valued work.

I want you to know that my Department is continuing to engage directly with other Departments on your behalf to support you as providers and employers.

Within the FAQs you will see that my Department is continuing to work intensively on your behalf in respect of payment for owner/managers. We will update you as soon as we have any further information on this.

Following our meeting a few days ago, we have been considering how we can continue to support you as providers with your non-deferrable and ongoing costs. The FAQs will, I hope, answer some of your questions and offer you reassurance with some of your concerns.

Within the FAQs you will also see that we have developed more detail on the financial contribution to non-deferrable and ongoing costs. We have introduced a minimum payment of €300 per week. This means that all services will get 15% of their pay costs (gross) or €300 per week, if this is larger.

I know that running a business is an onerous responsibility at the best of times. COVID-19 has brought the stresses associated with that role to an entirely new level, and within a very short space of time.



The Government recognises your much valued role with children and the pressures that you were already experiencing. These measures are good for staff. They will help you retain your staff and go some way to covering non-deferrable ongoing costs. The measures are also good for parents who cannot afford to continue to pay fees.

The FAQs will not answer all of your questions, but as I said above, we are already working on a second batch of FAQs and we will get them to you as soon as possible.

Again, thank you for your patience and I will be back in touch with you with further information as it becomes available.

Yours sincerely

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Dr. Katherine Zappone

Minister for Children and Youth Affairs