



**RE: Applications for new registration and applications for changes in circumstances
August 2022**

Dear Registered Provider,

In recent weeks we have received a number of queries relating to the Early Years Inspectorate's procedures and timeframes for processing applications for new registrations and for changes in circumstances. We have also become aware of activity and commentary on social media relating to this issue.

In order to provide clarity in relation to this issue, and in the spirit of openness and transparency in which we undertake all our regulatory activity, we met with early years sector stakeholder organisations on Friday 12th August. The video recording is available on our [website](#)

Every summer at this time we see a significant increase in the numbers of applications we receive as providers look to either establish new early years services or to make changes to existing services. We fully recognise the challenges providers experience in order to have everything in place for September and realise that this year providers are also working to secure Government funding. We always work hard to support providers in these circumstances and each year, where complete applications are submitted within timescales, we are able to process them.

The timeframes for submission of application for both new services and change in circumstances are set down in the regulations¹ and are published clearly in our documentation which is available on our [website](#).

To ensure a fair and transparent process for everyone, complete applications are dealt with in order of date of receipt. As soon as applications are submitted an automatic acknowledgement email will be sent. The registration office team will then review and assess each application and liaise with the applicant. Providers who submit incomplete applications are given an additional 10 days to submit any outstanding documents.

¹ All potential early years and school age care service providers must submit a complete application under section 58D (2) of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 **at least 3 months** before intending to commence operation of an early years or school aged care service. Applications which are not completed after 90 days from their first submission are closed under our Registration Policy and the application process starts again.

For changes in circumstances applications, in accordance with Regulation 8 of the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 (S.1. 221 of 2016) and Regulation 7 of the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services (Registration of School Age Services) Regulations 2018, providers must submit a complete application **60 days** in advance.

The main reason that processing of applications can be slowed down is when incomplete applications are submitted to the inspectorate. We cannot process an incomplete application. It is vital that all required documentation is submitted. If it is not, then the application may be closed, and the process will start again. Another factor is where services are not ready for the 'fit for purpose' inspection. It is essential that providers ensure that everything is ready in accordance with the application when the inspectors arrive.

While an application is being processed, we will communicate with providers regarding key stages of the application. For example, we will advise where information is missing, where the service has been passed to operations for a 'fit for purpose' inspection and when the application is approved or closed. We are not able to provide daily updates as this would take us away from the work of processing the applications themselves. We ask that providers are patient and allow us to undertake the necessary work. Where information is submitted correctly, we will process all applications as quickly as possible.

The current situation is that where **complete** applications were submitted before Monday 1st August 2022, and the 'fit for purpose' inspection meets regulatory requirements, the application will be approved by September. We cannot guarantee that applications submitted after 1st August will be approved but we will continue to work with you to try to bring applications to a conclusion. We need to remind you that services cannot operate a change without approval.

You can find lots of useful information on our website in relation to;

[Applications for new registrations](#)

[Changes in circumstances applications](#)

Further information and resources are available on our [Provider resources](#) page.

Whilst we make every effort to support providers, we will not tolerate rude and/or abusive language in any interactions with our staff. Unfortunately, there have been a small number of occasions in recent weeks where such language has been used. In these circumstances, our staff members will terminate the interaction immediately and advise a senior colleague.

We will continue to work hard to support providers to complete their applications successfully. We ask in return that providers read the information available on the website carefully, understand the required timescales, ensure that all necessary documents are submitted for each application, and work with our staff us through the application process.

Fiona McDonnell
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