



Core Funding Programme
2025/2026
for
Early Learning and Childcare
Services
Applicant Guidelines
August 2025
Version 2



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About Core Funding

Together for Better, the new funding model for early learning and childcare was launched in September 2022. Together for Better brings together four major programmes, the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme, including the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM), the National Childcare Scheme (NCS), Core Funding and the Equal Start model.

Core Funding operates alongside all other early learning and childcare programmes and constitutes additional income to services on top of these programmes, and income from parental fees.

The scheme is designed to meet the combined objectives of:

- Improved affordability for parents through the introduction of fee management and contractual requirements on providers to offer the National Childcare Scheme and/or the ECCE programme.
- Improved quality including through better pay and conditions for the workforce by supporting agreement on an Employment Regulation Order through the Joint Labour Committee;
- Supporting the employment of graduate staff; and
- Improved sustainability and stability for services.

Core Funding programme 2025/2026 operates from 1 September 2025 to 31 August 2026. This document aims to assist potential Core Funding Partner Services in their applications for the Programme Year 2025/2026.

Key Changes for 2025/2026

There are a number of key changes to the Service Profile and Core Funding Application Module for 2025/2026.

Core Funding Service Profile Changes:

Under the 'Facility Details' section there have been two new questions added, which were previously captured under the Annual Early Years Sector Profile, relating to wheelchair accessibility. These additional questions will be blank and will be mandatory for services to complete.

Within the Staff Members section, new mandatory questions are added for each staff type and two job titles will be removed from the 'Out of Ratio' staff type: AIM Level 7 (Assigned to specific children) and Equal Start Resource Allocation. Existing 'Out of Ratio' staff with these job titles will be updated to 'In Ratio Staff.' These need to be reviewed, and all mandatory fields updated. All new questions are mandatory, you must review and update information for all existing staff members.

Please note it is the responsibility of the Partner Service to ensure all relevant updates are made and all information recorded on their Service Profile is accurate and up to date.

Please refer to the [Service Profile Guidance Document](#) and [Core Funding Service Profile Changes](#) video for more information on the questions asked in each step of the Service Profile.

Core Funding Application Module changes:

Further information regarding What's new for Partner Services in Core Funding Year 4 can be found [here](#).

- Update Due Date (UDD)
All retrospective UDD's on the previous programme year Core Funding Application Module 2024/2025 must be actioned prior to starting the Core Funding Application Module for 2025/2026 programme call
- Auto populate functionality
Partner Services who have completed the May Review and Confirm process and are at an approved status will have the option to auto-populate their new Core Funding Application Module for the 2025/2026 programme year using the information from the most recently "Approved" Core Funding 2024/2025 Application.
For more information about auto populate functionality refer to "Part B Complete the Core Funding Application Module" in this document.

For more guidance relating to actioning your Update due date and Auto populating functionality, see the webinar and training videos on [Core Funding how-to videos - Service Provider Portal](#)

- Staff Funding Additional Contribution
The Staff Funding Additional Contribution is a new funding element of the calculation of a service's Core Funding grant for the 2025/2026 programme year. This new element will distribute the €45 million ring-fenced funding intended to support the outcomes of the independent Joint Labour Committee Process, and that can only be used towards staff pay and conditions.

The Staff Funding Additional Contribution cannot be spent on non-staff overheads, operational costs or other non-staff-related purposes.

The release of this funding, and the hourly rate at which it will be paid out is contingent on the establishment of updated Early Years Employment Regulation Orders (EROs) by the independent Early Years Joint Labour Committee (JLC). This funding will take effect from 1 September 2025 or the date that updated EROs are established, whichever is the later.

Data available to the Department shows that the 2022 and 2024 Employment Regulation Orders do not absorb all of the available Core Funding signalled for staff pay and graduate leaders. Therefore, the amount of funding released from the €45 million ring-fenced for improved staff pay and conditions (through the Staff Funding Additional Contribution) will be proportionate to the cost of the agreed EROs, with a maximum of €1.14 payable per hour.

The Staff Funding Additional Contribution is calculated as:

- minimum staffing hours *minus* graduate lead educator premium hours *multiplied by* the Staff Funding Additional Contribution hourly rate.

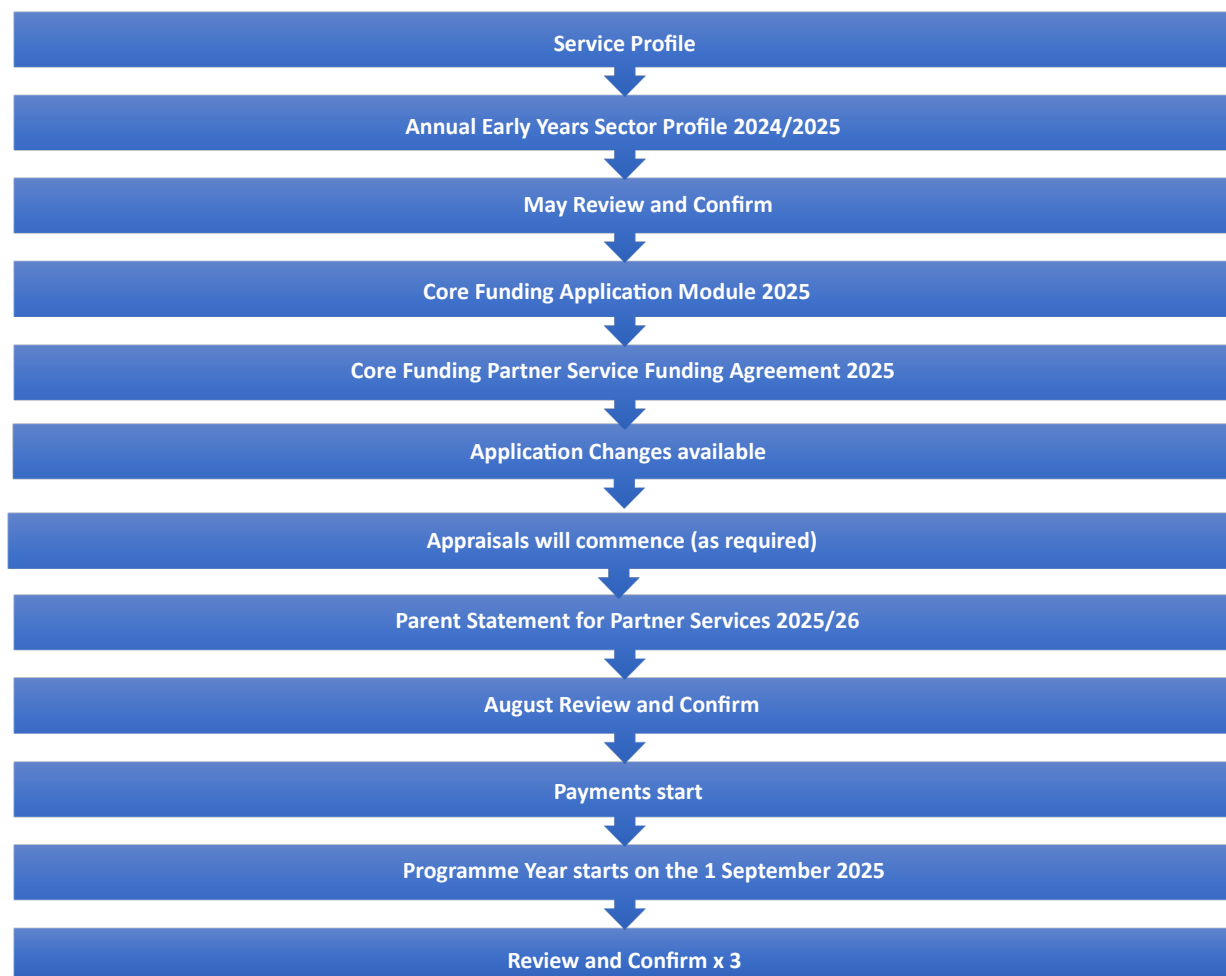
Minimum staffing hours are the minimum staff contact hours a Partner Service must provide to satisfy the regulatory adult to child ratios under the relevant Tusla regulations to offer the capacity listed on their Core Funding application. The Staff Funding Additional Contribution will be calculated based on the information input into the Service Profile and Core Funding Application Modules.

Childminders will not be eligible for the Staff Funding Additional Contribution.

For further information about the Staff Funding Additional Contribution refer to the Core Funding Partner Service Funding Agreement and Programme Rules document on [Early Years Hive](#).

Timeline

The timeline below outlines the Core Funding process for the Programme Year 2025/2026.



Note: New services wishing to join Core Funding are required to complete/update the Service Profile prior to beginning the Core Funding Application Module for the Programme Year 2025/2026.

Existing Partner Service are required to review/update the Service Profile prior to beginning the Core Funding Application Module for the Programme Year 2025/2026.

Partner Services with an **'Approved' May Core Funding Review and Confirm** will have the option to auto-populate their Core Funding Application Module for 2025/2026 using the information from the most recently approved Core Funding 2024/2025 Application.

Partner Services who submit their 2025/2026 Core Funding Application Module **on or before 31 August**, will have their base rate cap at their approved August Review and Confirm form.

Partner Services who submit their Core Funding application Module from the 1 September onwards will not be required to complete the August Review and Confirm window, and their base rate value will cap on the approval of their Original Core Funding Application Module.

Who can apply?

Community and privately owned Early Learning and Childcare Services who offer Full Time, Part Time or Sessional childcare registered with Tusla in the Republic of Ireland.

In relation to Childminders entering into Core Funding, only a person who was registered with Tusla as a “Childminder” in September 2024 under the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 and/or Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) (Registration of School Age Services) Regulations 2018, remained continuously registered and who is now registered with Tusla under the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) (Childminding Services) Regulations 2024 can be eligible to submit an application for Core Funding.

A Pre-School Service in a Drop-in Centre and SAC services that operate Drop-in care only, are not eligible for Core Funding.

Please note: The Core Funding application process is only available through the Early Years Hive. To onboard to the Early Years Hive please review the guidance document [HERE](#).

What must Service Providers do in advance of submitting the Core Funding Application Module?

1. Ensure all **Tusla Registration** Certificates assigned to their service are captured on the Early Years Hive under the My Account section. If Partner Services are registered as an ELC and an SAC service, both Tusla registration numbers must be reflected on the Early Years Hive – see guidance [here](#)
2. All facilities/locations operated by a service must have an individual **Service Reference Number** and children must attend the facility/location in which they are registered. A Service Provider must log onto the Early Years Hive with all the relevant details in order to request a new or additional Service Reference Number.
3. Complete the **Annual Early Years Sector Profile (AEYSP) 2024/2025**
Completion of the 2024/2025 Annual Early Years Sector Profile (AEYSP) survey is a pre-requisite for applying for Core Funding.
4. Complete the **Service Profile**
A service must have completed their Service Profile to apply for Core Funding. As a part of this process;

Partner Services are required to keep their Service Profile and information up to date throughout the programme year. Changes after signing the Core Funding Partner Service Funding Agreement relating to staff vacancies, staff qualifications and level of service offered may affect the initial Core Funding allocation. Failure to update the information may result in their Core Funding allocation being placed on hold or terminated.

Please refer to the [Service Profile Guidance Document](#) and [Core Funding Service Profile Changes](#) video

It is the responsibility of the Partner Service to make sure all information on the Service Profile, for example staff wages are kept up to date throughout the programme year as per the Core Funding Partner Service Funding Agreement 2025/2026 and Core Funding Rules Document.

How is Tusla Registration information linked to the Core Funding Application Module?

The Early Years Hive validates the Core Funding Application Module by cross checking information from the Tusla Register (including registered service type and capacity). This enables the Early Years Hive system to validate information about each service during an application process.

If Partner Services believe there are discrepancies in their Tusla Registration data, they are given the opportunity to attach evidence to support the correct registration information in the Early Years Hive during a Core Funding Application. For example, if a Partner Service was recently given permission to increase their capacity by Tusla, but this is not reflected in Step 1 of the Core Funding Application Module validations, they will be able to submit evidence of a change in capacity. The required evidence is a Tusla Certificate/Tusla letter dated no earlier than 3 months prior to the application submission date as part of Step 2 (evidence of Service Type) and Step 3 (evidence of Tusla Capacity) of the Core Funding Application Module process.

NB: Partner Services are not required to upload any evidence of a change in Tusla Registration details if there is no discrepancy in their Tusla registration data.

The Early Years Hive calculates and allocates the Flat Rate for Sessional Services only who have current and accurate Partner Services Tusla registration.

Childminders who were registered with Tusla in September 2024 under the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 and/or Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) (Registration of School Age Services) Regulations 2018, remained continuously registered and who are now registered with Tusla under the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) (Childminding Services) Regulations 2024 **will only have one Tusla registration number, even if they provide care to both ELC & SAC.**

How is Core Funding Calculated?

Core Funding allocations are calculated on a weekly basis. These weekly allocations are aggregated into monthly instalments which are paid in advance, spread across the entire programme year. Core Funding grant values will be calculated as follows, based on information provided by Partner Services in the Core Funding Application Module:

1. Base Rate

Base rate per session is calculated as:

Number of staffed child places in each age range *multiplied* by Hours of operation per week *multiplied* by Weeks open per year *multiplied* by Value that applies to each age range (see Table 1).

The value for all sessions is added together to produce the base rate for the Partner Service.

The Partner Service's base rate on the date of approval of their August Review and Confirm or the date of approval of their original Core Funding Application Module, whichever is the later, will be used as their highest value base rate for the programme year.

The Partner Service's base rate may fluctuate throughout the programme year, but no Partner Service will receive payments based on increases to their 'Base Rate Grant' above this highest approved capped 'Base Rate Grant' value.

The base rate can decrease if staffed capacity is reduced during the programme year. It can also be restored back up to the highest approved capped base rate value if staffed capacity is restored.

Capacity is lost when a room is closed or a staff member (graduate or non-graduate) leaves and is not replaced within four weeks so staff: child ratios cannot be maintained. However, Partner Services, except childminders, cannot fall below the minimum base rate allocation of €14,400

Please note:

- For Partner Services who submitted their 2025 Core Funding Application Module on or before the 31 August, their base rate will cap at their approved August Review and Confirm.
- For Partner Services who submitted their Core Funding application Module from the 1 September onwards, they will not be required to complete the August Review and Confirm window, and their base rate value will cap on the approval of their Original Core Funding Application Module.

Further detail on the allocation model is outlined in the Core Funding Partner Service Funding Agreement and Core Funding Rules Document 25/26.

- **Minimum Base rate allocation** - The minimum base rate allocation will be set at €14,400 for all Partner Services except childminders. This is the minimum amount of funding a centre-based Partner Service will receive from their **Core Funding base rate and the flat rate allocation** for sessional services where applicable. All Partner Services delivering centre-based provision, regardless of the size of their service, will receive at least this minimum base rate allocation. The €14,400 is a full programme year amount, Partner Services that are in Core Funding for less than a full programme year will be allocated the appropriate number of weekly payments.

Example: Base rate minimum allocation for three sample services

Examples	Service A (Part Time)	Service B (School Age)	Service C (Sessional)
Base Rate	€7,230	€ 3,899	€9,527
Does the Service Qualify for Base Rate Minimum	Yes	Yes	No
Base Rate after the Base Rate Minimum Allocation	€14,400	€14,400	€9,527
Flat Rate	N/A	N/A	€5,000
Graduate Premium	€3,037	N/A	€2,531
Total Core Funding	€17,437	€14,400	€17,058

Because Partner Services A and B received less than €14,400 from their base rate, they qualified for the minimum base rate allocation. This brought their allocation from their base rate up to €14,400. Partner Service C received more than €14,400 from their base rate and flat rate allocation combined and therefore did not qualify. After the minimum base rate allocation was applied, their Graduate Premiums were added, giving the services their total Core Funding for the programme year.

- **Maximum Base rate allocation**- There will be a maximum base rate allocation of €450,000. Partner Services will not receive base rate funding beyond this maximum value. This maximum does not apply to the Graduate Premiums or Staff Funding Additional Contribution, which may still increase a Partner Service's total allocation beyond this maximum base rate allocation.

A Partner Service's base rate may fluctuate throughout the programme year, but no Partner Service will receive payments based on increases to their 'Base Rate Grant' above this highest approved capped 'Base Rate Grant' value.

Please refer to the Core Funding Programme Rules Document [here](#) on Early Years Hive for further information.

2. Targeted Measures

Sessional Only Services - A flat rate allocation of €5,000 will be given to all services registered on the Tusla Register of Early Years Services as sessional only. This additional measure is only available to services with no other Tusla registration including School Age Childcare Registration on the Tusla School Age Register and/or Childminding Registration on the Tusla Childminding Register.

The €5,000 is a full programme year amount, Partner Services that are in Core Funding for less than a full programme year will be allocated the appropriate number of weekly payments. The flat rate allocation will be paid in addition to the Core Funding base rate and Graduate Premium.

Note: If, at any stage in the programme year a Partner Service change their registered Service Type with Tusla, they will become entitled to the flat rate allocation of €5000 for the appropriate number of weekly payments. Services are required to submit an application change as soon as their Tusla service type updates to trigger the flat rate payment. This allocation will be made to sessional only services regardless of the level of Core Funding they receive.

If a Partner Service entered into Core Funding during the Programme Year as a sessional only service and, therefore attracted the flat rate allocation, and then changed Tusla Service Type during the year they would retain the flat rate allocation for the duration of the Programme Year. If a service attracts the flat rate allocation at any point of the programme year they will continue to attract it for the rest of that programme year.

Services who are eligible for the flat rate will see the field “Flat Rate Grant” populated on step 4 - the summary page.

Example: Flat rate allocation for average sessional service

	Sessional Service Core Funding 2022/23 Programme Year (no flat rate allocation)	Sessional Service Core Funding 2025/26 Programme Year (with flat rate allocation)
Base Rate	€13,957	€13,000
Flat Top up Rate	N/A	€5,000
Graduate Premium	€3,386	€3,386
Total Core Funding	€17,793	€21,386

3. Graduate Lead Educator Premium

Graduate Lead Educator Premium is calculated for the hours worked by an eligible Lead Educator staff member in the room where an eligible ELC session operates. Though multiple Lead Educators can be assigned to a single room at any one time, the Graduate Lead Educator Premium is payable for one eligible staff member only at any one time within a room.

The Graduate Lead Educator Premium is calculated as: number of weekly room hours where a suitably qualified Lead Educator is assigned multiplied by the room operating weeks per year multiplied by the Graduate Lead Educator premium rate of €4.44, with a maximum of one Graduate Lead Educator Premium per room at a time.

Deputy Managers are eligible for the Graduate Lead Educator Premium if they are assigned as a Lead Educator in an ELC session and hold an eligible qualification as per the Department's list of approved Qualifications, QQI Level 7 or above. A Graduate Lead Educator must hold an eligible qualification as per the Department's list of approved Qualifications, QQI Level 7 or above.

The Graduate Lead Educator Premium is only paid out on eligible sessions. ELC Session Types are eligible for the Graduate Premium. SAC Only sessions are not eligible for the Graduate Premium.

Staff members in SAC only sessions are not eligible for the graduate premium. i.e. in a service offering a mix of Early Years and School Age sessions, staff in the school age sessions will not be eligible, even if they hold a level 7 qualification (or Letter of Qualification Recognition) and are Lead Educator.

Session types of Both ELC/SAC will be eligible for the Graduate Premium if an ELC Age Range has capacity in the session and the staff member assigned holds a level 7 qualification (or Letter of Qualification Recognition) and assigned the role of Lead Educator in the Core Funding application.

Session types of both ELC/SAC Session Types would not be eligible for the Graduate Premium if capacity is only linked to an SAC Age Range in the session.

Childminders are eligible for the Graduate Lead Educator Premium.

4. Graduate Manager Premium

The Graduate Manager Premium is a premium allocated where an ELC or combined ELC/SAC Partner Service has a Manager who holds a minimum QQI Level 7 qualification (or Letter of Qualification Recognition), as per the Department's list of approved [Qualifications](#) with a maximum of one Graduate Manager Premium per Partner Service.

The Graduate Manager Premium is calculated as the number of service operating hours per week that the Graduate Manager is working multiplied by Weeks per year the service operates where the Graduate Manager is working multiplied by Graduate Manager Premium rate of €4.44, with a maximum of one Graduate Manager Premium per service.

Note: The ELC Graduate Manager Premium is calculated on the basis of the hours in which the Manager is working, and the service is open and available to children. In practice this means the operating hours of the service or the working hours of the Manager, whichever is the lower.

A Graduate Manager Premium and a Graduate Lead Educator Premium cannot both be attracted by one individual.

SAC Only Services and Childminders are not eligible for the Graduate Manager Premium.

5. Staff Funding Additional Contribution

The Staff Funding Additional Contribution is a new element of the calculation of a services Core Funding grant for the 2025/26 programme year. This new element will distribute the €45 million ring-fenced funding intended to support the outcomes of the independent Joint Labour Committee Process and can only be used towards staff pay and conditions.

The Staff Funding Additional Contribution cannot be spent on non-staff overheads, operational costs or other non-staff-related purposes.

The release of this funding, and the hourly rate at which it will be paid out is contingent on the establishment of updated Early Years Employment Regulation Orders (EROs) by the independent Early Years Joint Labour Committee (JLC). This allocation will be released if and when new Employment Regulation Orders (ERO) are agreed or on 1 September 2025, whichever is later. Data available to the Department shows that the 2022 and 2024 Employment Regulation Orders do not absorb all of the available Core Funding signalled for staff pay and graduate leaders. Therefore, the amount of funding released from the €45 million ring-fenced for improved staff pay and conditions (through the Staff Funding Additional Contribution) will be proportionate to the cost of the agreed EROs, with a maximum of €1.14 payable per hour.

Ahead of new EROs, Partner Services will now see the Staff Funding Additional Contribution on Step 4 of the summary page from August, with a €0.00 until the EROs have been agreed.

When new EROs have been agreed, the next steps that are required by Partner Services will be communicated. However, in preparation for this, it is important that services have their application information for the 2025/2026 Core Funding programme year up to date and ensure their most recent application record is at an “Approved” status.

The Staff Funding Additional Contribution is calculated as:

Minimum staffing hours *minus* graduate lead educator premium hours *multiplied* by the Staff Funding Additional Contribution hourly rate.

Minimum staffing hours are the minimum staff contact hours a Partner Service must provide to satisfy the regulatory adult to child ratios under the relevant Tusla regulations in order to offer the capacity listed on their Core Funding application. The Staff Funding Additional Contribution will be calculated based on the information input into the Service Profile and Application Modules.

The calculated value of the Staff Funding Additional Contribution may increase and/or decrease throughout the programme year.

The system will calculate the Staff Funding Additional Contribution Allocation for each room and display the total value at Core Funding Application Level.

Childminders are not eligible for the Staff Funding Additional Contribution.

For further information regarding the Staff Funding Additional Contribution refer to the Core Funding Partner Service Funding Agreement and Programme Rules document on [Early Year Hive](#).

Table 1: Core Funding Base Rates

Age of child	Value Core of Funding per place per hour
Full Time and Part Time	
0-1 year of age	€1.90
1-2 years of age	€1.28
2-3 years of age	€1.10
3-6 years of age	€0.80
Sessional	
0-1 year of age	€1.90
1-2.5 years of age	€1.28
2.5-6 years of age	€0.76
School-age AM/ School-age PM	
4-15 years	€0.59
Graduate premium rates per hour	
Graduate Lead Educators in ELC	€4.44
Graduate Managers in ELC or combined ELC and SAC	€4.44

Staff Funding Additional Contribution	
Staff Funding Additional Contribution	TBC

The Core Funding Application Process 2025/2026

The Core Funding Application process consists of two parts, Part A and Part B.

Part A – Complete the Service Profile

1. Go to the My Account menu and select **Service Profile**.
2. Select the **Edit Service Profile** button to begin/update the Service Profile.

Please refer to the [Service Profile Guidance Document](#) for more information on the questions asked in each step of the Service Profile, including further information about the below changes:

Please note it is the responsibility of the Partner Service to ensure the Service Profile is accurate and kept up to date.

Privacy Statement

New applicants completing the Service Profile for the first time are required to accept a declaration on the Staff Members section of the Service Profile.

New and existing Partner Services are required to review and share the Privacy Statement with all staff.

Please review the Privacy Statement [here](#).

Part B – Complete the Core Funding Application Module

As part of the 2025/2026 Programme Call functionality has been delivered to ensure retrospective Update Due Dates are actioned prior to submitting a new Core Funding Application Module for a new programme year. The Partner Service cannot progress a new Core Funding Application Module in an active programme year if the “Outstanding Update Due Dates” in a previous program year are not resolved.

Partner Services who have completed the May Review and Confirm process and are at an approved status will have the option to auto-populate their new Core Funding Application Module for the 2025/2026 programme year using the information from the most recently “Approved” Core Funding 2024/2025 Application.

Partner Services will be presented with the option to transfer the information from their most recently approved Core Funding Application to auto-populate their Core Funding Application Module 2025/2026. Partner Services should select ‘yes’ if they wish to proceed with the auto-population.

At any stage prior to submission of the application, Partner Services can abandon their draft application and start again if they choose. If a Partner Service wishes to start a new application, this will also be possible by selecting ‘No’. If a Partner Service wants to change their selection after originally selecting the option not to transfer the information from their last approved Application, they are required to abandon the draft Application and start a new Application.

Please note if Partner Services do not receive the option to auto-populate the Core Funding Application Module 2025/2026 it may be due to one of the following reasons:

- The May Review and Confirm (or subsequent application change if referred back) is not approved.
- The most recent Application Change following the May Review and Confirm is not approved.
- The Core Funding 2024 Application Module was submitted during/after the May Review and Confirm Window, and Partner Services are not required to complete the May Review and Confirm. The option to auto-populate the information will not be available in this case.

How to start a Core Funding Application Module:

- Go to the Programme menu and select Core Funding Applications
- Select Start New Application – There are 4 steps to completing a Core Funding Application Module.

Refer to the How to videos on [Early Years Hive](#) for further guidance on Completing a Core Funding Application Module, amending Core Funding validation errors and actioning update due dates.

Start Application – Option to auto-populate 2024/2025 application information (if eligible).

Step 1 of 4 - Service Information

Step 2 of 4 - Rooms (Including Sessions, Capacity and Staff information)

Partner Services can include School Age Childcare sessions for the age range of 4-15 years during Term Time (Outside of normal School hours e.g. Breakfast Club, Afterschool) and during Out of Term. If a Partner Service includes a session for the age range of 4-15 year during Term Time during school hours, a validation will appear, and the Partner Service will be required to review and update their session and capacity information.

Step 3 of 4 - Validations

Step 4 of 4 - Summary

Important: When you submit your Core Funding Application, the application information is locked. No more changes can be made until the Application is 'Approved' or 'Referred Back'.

Parent Statement for Partner Services

Partner Services are required to complete a Parent Statement for Partner Services 2025/26 via the online webform which can be accessed on Early Years Hive under “My Account”.

Services must publish and distribute their completed Parent Statement to all service users and always display the Parent Statement in an area accessible to parents/guardians as well as on any online platform maintained by the service for the purpose of advertising or providing information to parents/guardians.

If you withdraw from Core Funding during the programme year you will need to re-issue your Parent Statement so that an updated Approved Provider Parent Statement is generated, i.e., no longer a Partner Service. Any changes to a service’s Fee Policy, subject to the allowable changes under the Funding Agreement, must be reflected in an updated Parent Statement for Partner Services, provided to the Scheme administrator and circulated to parents/guardians via email no later than 4 weeks after the change is made.

Partner Services who submit their original Core Funding application on or before the 31 August 2025 will be required to have submitted their Parent Statement for Partner Services 2025/2026 prior to being able to complete their August Review and Confirm.

From the 1 September onwards, Partner Services will be required to have submitted their Parent Statement for Partner Services 2025/2026 prior to being able to activate their Core Funding Partner Service Funding Agreement 2025/2026. Checks will be completed at all subsequent Review and Confirm windows to ensure Partner Services have a submitted Parent Statement for Partner Services 2025/2026.

Steps for a Partner Service up until 31 August 2025:

Until 31 August 2025, a Service Provider has the option to self-declare their service status and which version of the Parent Statement they wish to create. Your service should create and submit your Fees Table and select Partner Service if you are a service who has/intends to have an active Core Funding Partner Service Funding Agreement with the Minister and agrees to operate fee management and quality improvements for the programme year to which this Fee Table applies.

Steps for a Partner Service from 01 September 2025:

From 1 September 2025, if Partner Services or Approved Providers have yet to begin, or have not submitted a Core Funding Application Module for 2025/2026, the steps below must be followed in order:

1. Submit your Core Funding Application Module
2. Create and submit your Fees Table
3. Create and submit your Parent Statement for Partner Services 2025/26
4. Activate your Core Funding Partner Service Funding Agreement 2025

For an Approved Provider it is important to note that if signing up to Core Funding after 31 August providers are required to re-issue a Parent Statement so that an updated Parent Statement for Partner Services 2025/26 is generated. Please read through the Core Funding Rules document for further details on the Parent Statement for Partner Services.

If a service does not join Core Funding until after creating at least one Parent Statement for Approved Providers 2025/26, but joins at a later date, they will still need to retain any Parent Statement(s) for Approved Providers they created.

Quality and Inclusive Practice Plan (QIPP)

In accordance with Partnership for the Public Good, (DCEDIY 2021) the Core Funding model commits to drive high- quality service provision. To support this, Core Funding requires all early learning and care (ELC), school-age childcare (SAC) and childminding services that benefit from Core Funding to complete a Quality and Inclusive Practice Plan (QIPP) and an end of year QIPP Report, using tools provided by the Department.

Partner Services that enter into contract up until the 31 of October of the programme year must submit a QIPP and a QIPP report.

Partner Services that enter into contract after the 31 of October of the programme are not required to submit a QIPP and a QIPP report.

The QIPP is housed on the Core Funding Contractual Requirements Reporting System (www.cfcrrs.ie)

For further information on the process, or for CFCRRS portal support, please contact your local [City/County Childcare Committee \(CCC\)](#).

Core Funding Partner Service Funding Agreement

The Core Funding Partner Service Funding Agreement for Programme Year 2025/2026 is the contract for Core Funding.

Partner services will be required to accept the terms and conditions of Core Funding through signing the Core Funding Agreement for Partner Services. Partner Services have 21 days from the submission date of the original Core Funding Application Module to activate the Funding Agreement. Once 21 days passes, the Core Funding Application Module will be cancelled if the Funding Agreement is not activated. If the 21 days passes without accepting the Funding agreement, Partner Service are then required to start a new application submission on the Early Years Hive.

Full information and details on the Funding Agreement is available [here](#).

Additional information can also be found in the Core Funding Programme Rules 2025/2026 [here](#).

The Funding Agreement will start on the date of acceptance by the Partner Service, or 1 September 2025, whichever is later and will expire on 31 August 2026 (Term) unless otherwise terminated by the Minister.

Please note: Core Funding allocations will be representative of an entitlement from the first Monday after which the Programme Year begins, or the Monday of the week the Funding Agreement is accepted, whichever is later. Partner Services that are in Core Funding for less than a full programme year will be allocated the appropriate number of weekly payments.

The Funding Agreement will only become available on the [Early Years Hive](#) once the original Core Funding Application Module for Programme Year 2025/2026 is at **Submitted**.

To activate the Core Funding Partner Service Funding Agreement, log into the Early Years Hive portal and follow the below steps:

- Go to [All Programme Applications](#) under the heading Programme
- Select Core Funding Partner Service Funding Agreement from Available Programme Applications and select Start
- Review Programme Details and select Next
- Confirm your Primary Authorised User (PAU) and select Next
- Confirm your Organisation and select Next

- Confirm your Bank Account and select Next
- Confirm your Service Provider and select Next
- Confirm your Tusla Registration and select Next
- Read and accept the Core Funding Partner Service Funding Agreement
- Select Submit

Pre-requisites for signing the Core Funding Partner Service Funding Agreement

On the Early Years Hive, prior to activating the Core Funding Partner Service Funding Agreement, Partner Services are contracted into the relevant Funding Programme(s) based on Tusla Registration types.

Prior to accepting the terms of the Funding Agreement on the Hive, the Partner Service must contract into NCS in the 2025/2026 Programme Year (unless the service is registered with Tusla as a Pre-school Sessional Service only).

Partner Services are required to contract to the ECCE programme in the 2025/2026 programme year, unless the service is registered on the Tulsa Register of School Age Services as School Aged only, or the services do not offer care to any eligible age range for the ECCE programme.

From the 1 September onwards, Partner Services will be required to have submitted their Parent Statement for Partner Services 2025/2026 prior to being able to activate their Core Funding Partner Service Funding Agreement 2025/2026.

Applicants will be required to confirm that their initial application data is correct and accurate in a pre-programme year Review and Confirm window which will take place in August 2025.

Appraisal of submitted applications

The appraisal process will consist of a review of the supporting documentation submitted to support the qualification of the Lead Educator and/or Manager and/or updated Tusla information.

As part of the appraisal process, applications may be referred back to the applicant if the supporting evidence provided is not acceptable or to request further information. Once all supporting information submitted has been appraised and approved, the Core Funding Application status will be set to approved.

If a staff member who is generating a Graduate Lead Educator or Manager premium has previously been appraised and approved on the last approved Core Funding Application Module, they will not require re-appraisal.

As part of the appraisal process, applications may be referred back to the applicant if the supporting evidence provided is not acceptable or to request further information.

Once all supporting information submitted has been appraised and approved, the Core Funding Application Module status will be set to 'Approved'.

Appraisals should be processed within 6 weeks of submission of the application form.

If the Original Core Funding Application Module is in a referred back cycle and has never been approved, Partner Services will not receive a Core Funding Payment.

If a Partner Service has an approved application, they will receive a Core Funding payment based on this approved value, subject to allocation and payment rules, such as base rate capping, Review and Confirm not on hold, etc. If the service submits an Application Change, they will continue to receive their pre-existing approved Core Funding allocation, while awaiting approval of the Application Change.

Referred Back applications:

As part of the appraisals process, a Core Funding Application Module can be referred-back to a Partner Service for additional information when necessary. A notification, and subsequent reminders, will be issued outlining the reason(s) for refer-back and the updates/actions required by the Partner Service in order to progress their application towards approval.

If the Original Core Funding Application Module is in a referred back cycle and has never been approved, Partner Services will not receive a Core Funding Payment. Once approved, allocations will generate from the first Monday after which the Programme Year begins, or the Monday of the week the Funding Agreement is accepted, whichever is later.

When an application is referred-back, Partner Service must edit their Core Funding Application Module/Application Change to address the reason(s) for refer-back. Examples of reasons why an application may be referred back, and the relevant actions required of applicants in such scenarios, are outlined below:

Update required to Tulsa information:

Applications referred back due to Capacity and/or Service Type changes, are required to provide evidence of a Tulsa Certificate/Tulsa letter/Tulsa email dated no earlier than 3 months prior to the submission date of the first referred back application and no later than the original submission date of the referred back application.

Where a Partner Service have indicated that they had higher capacity on their original Core Funding application, than on the Tulsa register, and have provided insufficient supporting evidence of Tulsa approval for this increased capacity declared, these applications will be "Referred Back".

- If a Partner Service edits their Core Funding Application Module/Application Change and attaches insufficient supporting evidence again, this will result in their Core Funding payments being placed on hold.
- The Partner Service will have two further attempts to submit the correct documentation of Tulsa approval for their increased capacity declared or correct their application and reduce their capacity to that registered with Tulsa.

Note: If the corrective action is not taken, this may result in their Core Funding Application being declined.

Update required to a Staff Qualification:

- Attach the eligible document to the staff member on the Service Profile. - where additional documents are required, please add the additional documents to the application, but ensure you do not remove any of the documents which were included on the original submission.
- If the name doesn't agree to the Qualification, please amend the name field on the staff record in the Service Profile.
- In the event of duplicated staff, please ensure the relevant staff member is deactivated on the Service Profile in line with the comment.
- **Submit an application change** by updating the Staff Member and/or Capacity Change effective date with the current date. Partner Services do not need to make any further updates to the Core Funding Application Module at this time.
- If a Partner service edits their Core Funding Application Module/Application Change and is required to be referred back again three times, this will result in their Core Funding payments being placed on hold.

Note: If the incorrect information is submitted three further times, this may result in their Core Funding Application being declined.

A Partner Service should make changes relating to the reason(s) for refer-back only. Any additional changes must be submitted as a separate application change once the initial application has been approved.

Core Funding Application Changes

Application Changes functionality is available for two Programme Years, Core Funding 2024/2025 and Core Funding 2025/2026.

A provider can update their Service Profile at any time and should ensure to maintain it on an on-going regular basis. Details about the rules for making application changes can be found in Schedule 2 of the Core Funding Partner Service Funding Agreement, 'Core Funding Rules Document' which can be found [here](#).

2024/2025 Core Funding

Partner Services should ensure they complete all of their 2024/2025 Application Changes prior to submitting their 2025/2026 application, where possible.

For example, if Partner Services have changes to make to their 2024/2025 application, they should make these changes via an application change to their latest 2024/2025 application, before they apply/update their application for Core Funding 2025/2026.

2025/2026 Core Funding

Once the Partner Service has completed the Service Profile and submitted their 2024/2025 Application Changes, they will then be able to edit the Service Profile to reflect any changes to the operation of the service for programme year 2025/2026, where applicable.

After making any required amendments, the service will then be able to apply/update their application for Core Funding 2025/2026.

Application changes must be made in **chronological order** of when the change occurred. **If application changes are not submitted in chronological order, previous changes will be superseded by the most recent application change submitted, which will lead to additional administration and may impact funding.** Partner Services must wait until each change is approved before submission of the next change. Therefore, Partner Services should ensure that all information provided is accurate with the correct supporting documentation attached where applicable.

Prior to submitting an Application Change, Partner Services should make sure their Service Profile is up to date and accurate.

How to access an Application Change

To make a change to a Core Funding Application go to **Programmes – Core Funding – Core Funding Applications**.

A step by step guidance video can be viewed [here](#)

Recording an Application Change

To submit an application change, Partner Services must provide a change effective date for the change(s) they wish to make. The change effective date is the date the change was implemented in the service.

Application Changes allow Partner Services to input an effective date as any date from the date of the original Application Module submission until the date before the next Review and Confirm window.

Change Effective Dates

A Core Funding week starts on a Monday and ends on a Sunday.

On step 1 of the application change Partner Services can record the following change effective dates:

- **Service Level and/or Service Manager Change Effective Date** - This date should reflect changes to Service level information and/or Service Manager.
 - E.g. Change in operating hours or change in Service Manager working hours.
- **Staff Member and/or Capacity Change Effective Date** - This date should reflect changes to staff and/or capacity within the service.
 - E.g. Staff member becomes a Lead Educator in a room or change in capacity.

Both date fields are mandatory. If the change only relates to one of these areas, Partner Services must include the date of the change in the relevant section and the application change submission date in the other.

For example, if the change relates to the employment of an additional Graduate Lead Educator, Partner Services should include the start date of the staff member under Staff Member and/or Capacity Change Effective Date (2) and the current date in the Service Level and/or Service Manager Change Effective Date (1).

A screenshot of a web form with two sections. The top section is titled '* Service Level and/or Service Manager Change Effective Date' and has a red circle with the number '1.' next to it. The bottom section is titled '* Staff Member and/or Capacity Change Effective Date' and has a red circle with the number '2.' next to it. Both sections have a calendar icon on the right side.

If applications changes are not submitted in chronological order, previous changes will be superseded by the most recent application change submitted, which will lead to additional administration and may impact funding.

Partner Services must wait until each change is approved before submission of the next change. Therefore, Partner Services should ensure that all information provided is accurate with the correct supporting documentation attached where applicable.

It is the responsibility of Partner Services to monitor application statuses and notifications.

Examples of recording changes:

Example 1: Recording two changes relating to staff with the same effective date

(Note: the changes can be recorded in the one application change)

Two new staff members start on the same week. Both staff members must be recorded on the Service Profile and then added into the application change with the same **Staff Member and/or Capacity Change effective date**. The **Service Level and/or Service Manager Change Effective date** is the date the application change is submitted on.

Example 2: Recording one change regarding service level information and two staff updates

(Note: the changes can be recorded in the one application change)

1. Increase in operating hours (service level information). Update the operating hours in the Service Profile and input the date they were implemented into the **Service Level and/or Service Manager Change Effective date** on the Core Funding application change.
2. Updating of staff member A to a Lead Educator (both staff changes will be captured under the same change effective date when submitting the application change, as they both occurred in the same week.)
Inputting staff member B to a Room

Make the relevant updates in the Service Profile to reflect the staff and Input the **Staff Member and/or Capacity Change Effective date** as the date the changes were implemented.

Review & Confirm

Core Funding Partner Services are required to Review and Confirm their Core Funding Application information a number of times within the programme year.

August 2025 Review and Confirm

Partner Services who have submitted their original 2025/2026 Core Funding Application Module on or before 31 August must complete the August Review and Confirm to allow Core Funding payments to commence. If a Partner Service does not complete the Review and Confirm process within the required timeframe, Core Funding payments will be placed on hold until such a time as the process is completed. Partner Services can complete Review and Confirm with two options available:

1. Review and Confirm with Changes
2. Review and Confirm without Changes

It is important to note that Partner Services who submit their original 2025/2026 Core Funding Application Module on or before 31 August, will have their base rate capped at their approved August Review and Confirm Base Rate value.

Therefore, Partner Services should ensure to review the grant values displayed on the Summary Funding section of the summary page and ensure all information on their application has been recorded correctly, prior to submission of their Review and Confirm. After a Partner Service clicks 'Submit', the application will be locked, and no further changes can be made at this time until your application is 'Approved'.

For Partner Services who submit their Core Funding application from 1 September onwards, they will not be required to complete the August Review and Confirm window, and their Base Rate will cap on the approval of their original Core Funding Application Module.

Prior to completing the August Review and Confirm, Partner Services should:

- Ensure all data captured in the Service Profile is accurate and up to date for the 2025/2026 programme year.
- Complete their Fee Table for Partner Services and Parent Statement for Partner Services 2025/2026.
- Ensure your Core Funding Application is at status 'Approved'. If your application is at 'Referred back', you must address the reason for refer back prior to completing the August Review and Confirm process.

If you have an Update Due Date populated on your most recently 'Approved' 2025/2026 Core Funding application record prior to the date you submit your August Review and Confirm, you must action this as part of your Review and Confirm using the option of 'Review and Confirm with Changes' either replacing the departed staff member or reducing your capacity.

November Review and Confirm Onwards

Checks will be completed at all subsequent (November, February & May) Review and Confirm windows to ensure Partner Services have a submitted Parent Statement for Partner Services 2025/2026.

The Review and Confirm window will open for specific periods throughout the programme year:

Review and Confirm Window	
August	1 August 2024 - 31 August 2024
November	1 November 2024 – 14 November 2024
February	1 February 2025 – 14 February 2025
May	1 May 2025 – 14 May 2025

Review and Confirm will become available on the latest approved application from the Review Period Start Date. Once the Review and Confirm has been approved with the Review and Confirm submission date appearing, the Review and Confirm option will no longer be available and the 'Application Change' option will return to the latest approved application.

There are two options to select when starting the Review and Confirm Process:

- Review and Confirm with Changes

If a service has changes that will occur during the Review and Confirm period, they may select this option

- Review and Confirm Without Changes

If a service has no changes they need to make, then the service can proceed with this option and will be provided with a read only option and a view of their summary

This process enables Core Funding payments to continue by facilitating Partner Services to confirm that no changes have occurred or to submit an application change. If a Partner Service does not complete the Review and Confirm process within the required timeframe, Core Funding payments will be placed on hold until such a time as the process is completed.

Core Funding Allocations up to the next Review and Confirm quarter will move from a provisional to approved status on approval of a Review and Confirm submission. Only approved allocations will move forward for payment.

Only Applications/Application Changes at an Approved status can complete the Review & Confirm process.

If an application is at "Referred back" Partner Services must edit their Core Funding Application Module/Application Change to address the reason(s) for refer-back. Once the application is approved, Partner Services must then proceed to complete the Review & Confirm form.

If an application has an Update Due Date in the past, the Partner Service must action this Update Due Date as part of the Review and Confirm. If an application has an Update Due Date in the future, the Partner Service is not required to action the Update Due Date as part of the Review and Confirm. Once the Review and Confirm is approved, the Update Due Date can be actioned through an application change.

Review and Confirm History

Partner Services can view the Review and Confirm History relating to their service for the 2025/2026

Core Funding Programme Year, and all future years of the Core Funding programme, by navigating to the Core Funding Applications section and clicking on the link displayed above the Core Funding Application information.

The Review and Confirm History page has a grid showing the following headings:

- Application - This is the Application ID the Review and Confirm was completed on.
- Review and Confirm Period Name - This is the related Review and Confirm Window.
- Review and Confirm Submitted Date - This is the date the Review and Confirm was submitted.
- Review and Confirm Type - This outlines whether a Review and Confirm with or without changes was completed.
- Review and Confirm Approval Date - This is the date the Review and Confirm record was approved

Only Review and Confirm records at a status of 'Submitted' or later will appear here. Partner Services can view 'Draft' Review and Confirms records by navigating to Programmes > Core Funding Application Module.

Employment Regulation Order Changes

The Staff Funding Additional Contribution is designed specifically to support employers to meet the costs of further increases to the minimum rates of pay in the sector, if and when new EROs come into effect.

The release of this funding, and the hourly rate at which it will be paid out is contingent on the establishment of updated Early Years Employment Regulation Orders (EROs) by the independent Early Years Joint Labour Committee (JLC). This funding will take effect from 1 September 2025 or the date that updated EROs are established, whichever is the later.

Data available to the Department shows that the 2022 and 2024 Employment Regulation Orders do not absorb all of the available Core Funding signalled for staff pay and graduate leaders. Therefore, the amount of funding released from the €45 million ring-fenced for improved staff pay and conditions (through the Staff Funding Additional Contribution) will be proportionate to the cost of the agreed EROs, with a maximum of €1.14 payable per hour.

Update Due Date

An Update Due Date on the Early Years Hive is set on a Core Funding Application/change for the below reasons:

- Partner Services have added a Vacancy in the Service Profile and Core Funding Application Module.
- Partner Services have end dated a Staff member in the Service Profile.

When a Service Manager's employment end date is included in the Service Profile, the Update Due Date is set to the following weekday after the employment end date. However, if the original application submission date is later than the Update Due Date, the system will set the Update Due Date to the original application submission date.

Partner Services will have a four-week period to submit an application change to reflect a replacement staff member or reduction in capacity, otherwise the full Core Funding payment will be placed on hold.

As payments are issued monthly in advance, allocations dated after the Update Due Date will not be eligible for payment until an application change to reflect a replacement staff member or reduction in capacity is approved. In some cases, this will lead to a reduced payment during the four-week period. If required, catch-up payments can be made once an application change has been approved.

Refer to the [Core Funding Update Due Date In Ratio Staff](#) Video on Hive for further guidance on actioning an Update Due Date.

Note: Once the employment end date relating to the departing staff member has passed, Partner Services must ensure the remove the staff member from their Core Funding application either by replacing the staff member or reducing capacity if a replacement has not been found.

Sessional Service Type Staff Members:

Reminder for Partner Services with a Sessional Service Type

Staff members **should not be end dated** if they will be returning the following programme year. Staff members should only be end-dated if they are ceasing employment and are **not returning**. If you have included an end date for a staff member who is returning the following programme year, the end date for the staff member in the Service Profile should be removed in the Service Profile.

Staff who are on long term leave i.e., Maternity leave/sick leave will continue to be included in funding for a maximum period of 4 weeks or the date on which they are replaced, whichever is the earliest. These staff members should not be end-dated in the Service Profile. An Application Change should be submitted to include a replacement staff member or reduce the capacity prior to the end of the four-week period.

Vacancy for In Ratio staff members and Deputy Manager

Vacancies can be included as part of the Core Funding Original Application Module submission and the August Review and Confirm submission until the point the Review and Confirm form is approved or the August Review and Confirm window closes, whichever is earlier.

New Applicants submitting a new Core Funding Application Module after the August Review and Confirm can add vacancies for In Ratio staff members or Deputy Managers as part of the Core Funding Original Application Module submission only.

Assigning a vacancy to a Core Funding application is treated in the same way as a named person is, i.e., the vacancy is included in the staff ratios as part of the staffed capacity of the service.

Adding a vacancy to the application will set an Update Due Date for either the Programme Call Start Date plus four weeks or the Application submission date plus four weeks, whichever is later. Partner Services will have until the Update Due Date to submit an application change, once changes are available, to reflect a replacement staff member or reduction in capacity, otherwise the full Core Funding payment will be placed on hold.

Update Due Date Managers

Partner Services must have a designated person in charge (termed the 'Manager') who is responsible for the daily running of the service and – unless deputised by a named person – must be on the premises at all times when the service is operating.

When a Service Manager ceases employment there is no four-week allowance.

Refer to the [Core Funding Update Due Date Replacing a Manager](#) video on Hive for further guidance on actioning an Update Due date for a Service Manager.

Capacity

For Partner Services who submit a 2025 Core Funding Application Module on or before the 31 August, their base rate will cap at the approved August Review and Confirm.

For Partner Services who submit their Core Funding application Module from the 1 September onwards, there is no requirement to complete the August Review and Confirm window, and the base rate value will cap on the approval of the Original Core Funding Application Module.

A Partner Service's base rate may fluctuate throughout the programme year, but no Partner Service will receive payments based on increases to the 'Base Rate Grant' above this highest approved capped 'Base Rate Grant' value.

Partner Service should still record an increase via an application change but this will not impact base rate (capacity) funding allocations. Graduate Premiums and Staff Funding Additional Contribution can be increased throughout the programme year.

The base rate can reduce during the programme year. It can also be restored back up to the highest value base rate (as noted above) if staffed capacity is restored.

Withdrawing from Core Funding

A Partner Service should only withdraw if leaving the Core Funding Programme.

Clause 8 of the Core Funding Partner Service Funding Agreement 2025/2026 stipulates Termination and Withdrawal Terms and Conditions.

All Partner Services must fully read and fully understand the Funding Agreement to adhere to the requirements, and all other contractual requirements under the Funding Agreement until the date of its termination. Partner Services are thereby required to give three months notice in advance of the notification date on which they intend to terminate their Funding Agreement, by submitting a Service Request on the Early Years Hive.

How to Withdraw from Core Funding

If a Partner Services wishes to withdraw from the Core Funding Programme, they can do so by submitting a Service Request on the Early Years Hive outlining the withdrawal date and the reason for the withdrawal. Please see the below option when creating a Service Request:

- Programme – Core Funding
- Request Type – Withdrawal

All outstanding actions must be completed prior to withdrawing from the Core Funding Programme.

When the withdrawal process is completed, the most recent Core Funding Application/Application Change record will display the 'Withdrawn' status only.

Withdrawal requests are processed on or after the withdrawal date to allow amendments to be made or address outstanding actions. Once the withdrawal request is processed, no further changes can be submitted.

The below information/criteria needs to be provided/met by the Partner Service:

- Partner Services must outline the withdrawal date and the reason for the withdrawal.
- Partner Services must provide a minimum of three months written notice when withdrawing from Core Funding as per clause 8 of the Core Funding Partner Service Funding Agreement, found [here](#).
- Pending Review and Confirm forms must be completed prior to withdrawing from the Core Funding Programme. The withdrawal cannot be processed until the Review and Confirm is actioned.
- Pending Update Due Dates prior to the withdrawal date must be completed prior to withdrawing from the Core Funding Programme. The withdrawal cannot be processed until the Update Due Date is actioned.

Partner Services cannot re-apply prior to the Withdrawal Date and payments between the withdrawal date and the contracting date of the new application will not be backdated in the case of a gap in weeks.

Please note: A Partner Service may re-apply after a withdrawal however they cannot increase their Base Rate on the new application.

Summary Page

The summary page of the Core Funding Application Module displays a breakdown of each room including the staff, capacity and premiums relating to each room as outlined in the application. It is important that the information and grant values on this page are reviewed as once the application is submitted, no further changes can be made until the application is 'Approved'.

The grant values displayed on this page are calculated using the information provided in this application and are reflective of a full Core Funding Programme year (1 September - 31 August). Partner Services actual Core Funding allocations are representative of the entitlement from the Monday on which the programme year begins, or the Monday of the week on which Funding Agreement is accepted, whichever is later.

The 'Annual Grant' and 'Weekly Grant' values displayed are representative of the 'Base Rate Grant', 'Flat Rate' (where applicable), 'Graduate Lead Educator Premium' (if applicable), 'Graduate Manager Premium' (if applicable) and Staff Funding Additional Contribution (if applicable). The 'Annual Grant' and 'Weekly Grant' do not include the minimum and maximum targeted measures which may impact your service.

If the total 'Base Rate Grant' value and 'Flat Rate' (where applicable), outlined is less than the minimum value or exceeding the maximum value, this will be displayed in the 'Min Base Rate' (except Childminders) or 'Max Base Rate' field and your allocations will be adjusted accordingly, which will be reflected through your Core Funding payments.

The actual Core Funding allocations will be dependent on 'Base Rate Grant' capping rules.

For further details on the rules for 'Base Rate Capping', please see section 3.2 of the Core Funding Rules Document 2025/2026.

Payments and Allocations

Once all validations have been passed on the Core Funding Application Module, the applicant will be able to review their un-appraised Core Funding values before submission. The calculation inputs and outputs will be made available on the summary page for the applicant to reference as required. Once the application is submitted, this becomes read only and remains on the system.

ELC sessional only services will be able to view the 'Flat Rate' value on the summary page.

The un-appraised value is the amount of funding the applicant will be allocated until such a time as it is appraised (where applicable) and approved.

Subsequent application changes may impact funding allocations, depending on the type of change submitted. Changes to funding allocations will be effective from the change effective date or the application change submission date.

See below examples of effective dates:

- An Application Change leading to an increase in the Base Rate Grant (up the highest approved value), Graduate Lead Educator Premium and/or Graduate Manager Premium will be applied from the Application Change Submission Date or the Change Effective Date, whichever is the later.
- An Application Change leading to a decrease in the Base Rate Grant, Graduate Lead Educator Premium and/or Graduate Manager Premium will be applied from the Change Effective Date.

Approved Core Funding allocations can be viewed on the Early Years Hive under Programme Funding.

Core Funding will be paid monthly in advance, in four or five weekly instalments, depending on the month spread across the entire programme year. Core Funding payments will be made monthly in advance starting in August 2025.

Weekly catch-up payments will be facilitated.

The August Review and Confirm must be completed and at an "Approved" status before payments start. For Partner Services who submit their Core Funding application Module from 1 September onwards, they will also receive payment once their original Core Funding Application Module reaches an "Approved" status

Core Funding will be paid into the bank account listed for each service on the Hive, through the same processes as ECCE and NCS. It is important, for those schemes as well as for Core Funding, to ensure that all bank account details are up to date.

Further Information

For further information regarding the Core Funding Programme, visit the gov.ie website [here](#).

Early Years Provider Centre (EYPC): The Pobal Early Years Provider Centre is available to assist ELC and SAC providers with their online applications for Core Funding.

For queries relating to technical support, accessing, and using the Early Years Hive and / or questions about sector/service profile or application queries please raise a 'Service Request' on the Early Years Hive.

The Early Years Provider Centre is open Monday to Friday, 9.00am – 5.00pm, however on Wednesday the opening times are 10.00am - 5.00pm.

City and County Childcare Committees (CCCs): The [CCCs](#) are also available to support local ELC and SAC providers with queries associated with Core Funding. In particular, questions relating to specific Service Profile requirements or the Core Funding Application Module should be directed to the local City and County Childcare Committee in the first instance.