



19 May 2021

Grandfathering Declarations Extension

Dear Provider,

We are writing to you in relation to the Grandfathering Declaration for the early learning and care sector. This was a temporary exemption from the qualifications requirement which was introduced as part of the 2016 regulations. **The exemption is due to expire on 31 August 2021.**

While those who signed a Grandfathering Declaration have had five years in which to gain a relevant Level 5 qualification, the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) recognises that the final 1.5 years of this period will - by September 2021 - have been during Covid-19. This may have created a range of challenges for individuals to obtain an appropriate qualification.

In recognition of the exceptional circumstances and disruption caused by the pandemic, an extension to the Grandfathering Declaration can be applied for by practitioners who agree to undertake a relevant qualification during the period of the extension. The maximum duration of the extension, which will depend on the duration of relevant training courses, will be confirmed shortly – further details will be made available through your local City/County Childcare Committee (CCC).

In order to take up the opportunity of this extension, a practitioner **must**:

- Have originally signed a grandfathering declaration on or before 30 June 2016;
- Be currently working in the sector, either in an early learning and care service, or a school-age childcare service, or as a Tusla-registered childminder;
- Enrol in and undertake an appropriate qualification (see below); and
- Receive an approval letter from your local CCC. Details of the process for obtaining this letter will be provided later. Evidence will be required of enrolment on a relevant training course.

If a practitioner is interested in obtaining an extension to their Grandfathering Declaration, they must contact their local County Childcare Committee (CCC) at the earliest opportunity. The CCC will be the relevant contact point for approval of extensions and for providing supports and advice. In the first instance, when a practitioner makes contact with the local CCC, the CCC will ask about the practitioner's situation and what specific supports the practitioner might require.

If a practitioner does not wish to avail of this extension opportunity, the original terms of the Grandfathering Declaration will continue to apply. In these instances, the County



Childcare Committees will be in a position to provide some practical advice to services. Specialist HR advice may also be available from representative bodies for service providers.

For practitioners working in centre-based early learning and care services, appropriate training courses will be those that lead to a major award at Level 5 in early childhood care and education / early learning and care.

For Tusla-registered childminders, appropriate training will be through a Foundation Training programme to be developed in line with the National Action Plan for Childminding (www.gov.ie/childminding).

In advance of expiry of the current Grandfathering Declarations on 1 September, the Early Years Services Regulations will be amended to reflect this extension, to ensure that those who avail of the extension opportunity are recognised as being in compliance with the Regulations.

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