



**Childcare
Committee**
County Kildare

Coiste Cúram Páistí Chontae Chill Dara



2024

Annual Report



An Roinn Leanaí, Comhionannais,
Míchumais, Lánpháirtíochta agus Óige
Department of Children, Equality,
Disability, Integration and Youth



pobal

government supporting communities

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Company Information

Address	Unit 21 Thompson Enterprise Centre Clane Business Park Clane Co. Kildare W91 E6NY
Contact	Web: www.kccc.ie Email: info@kildarechildcare.ie Tel: 045 861307
Company Registration Number	355991
Charitable Status Number	15585
Registered Charity Number	20054175
Revenue Employers Number	6375991Q
Company Secretary	Edel Smyth
Directors (*Date resigned)	Ed Drew Edel Smyth Yvonne Darragh Nicola McDonnell Ciaran Scanlon* 02.04.25 Raymond Fullam Edelle McMonagle
Company Auditor	Patrick Lane & Co Chartered Accountants Registered Auditors 69 Main Street Blackrock Co. Dublin A94N6D0 Tel: +353 (0)86 8153157 Email: Patrick.lane@patricklane.com
Bankers	Allied Irish Bank 41 South Main Street Naas Co. Kildare Tel: 045 879136

A Foreword from our Chairperson



My name is Ed Drew and I was appointed Chairperson of The Kildare County Childcare Committee (KCCC) in December 2022. It is a pleasure for me to welcome you to the 2024 annual report.

During 2024, KCCC continued to demonstrate that we are a resilient, adaptable and flexible organisation that has met all its objectives contained within the Statement of Work.

Our mission and our Core values demonstrate the type of organisation we aim to be:

“KCCC strives to ensure that early childhood is understood as a significant and distinct time in life that must be valued, nurtured and respected, and that every child in Kildare has equal access to the highest quality education and childcare experiences within their local communities”.

Child Centred: Everything we do is driven by the welfare of children.

Inclusive: We value the diversity within our local communities in County Kildare and promote opportunities for participation and equal access for all.

Respectful: We listen and treat everyone fairly keeping an open mind.

Collaborative: Together we are better and create greater impact.

Accountable: We are responsible for our decisions and contributions.

Supportive: We are encouraging, helpful and seek to bring value to all we engage with.

I'd like to extend my thanks and gratitude to all the staff in KCCC who work tirelessly to promote the highest standard of childcare in this county. As Chair and as a father of three young children, I cannot thank you all enough.

I look forward to working with all in 2025 and continuing to provide a wonderful, child centred, inclusive, respectful, collaborative, accountable and supportive service.

Sincerely,

Ed Drew

Chairperson, KCCC

Message from our CEO



It is with great pride we publish our 22nd Kildare County Childcare Committee Annual Report for 2024. Consistently, for the past 22 years, the KCCC team have completed all actions as set out by the DCEDIY in our Statement of Work to a high standard and 2024 was no exception. As you will see in this report, we completed a number of additional actions meeting the emergent needs of service providers, families and children locally, including providing dedicated supports to children and families living in emergency accommodation centres through interagency collaboration with Kildare Children and Young People's Services Committee.

We continued to navigate the fast-changing ECCE sector with a flexible

approach, aiming to meet the individual and group needs of children and families in Kildare.

Our team worked closely with a range of support agencies to fulfil our Statement of Work and meet our Strategic Goals.

In 2024, as a collaborative action with Kildare Children and Young People's Services Committee, we completed a bespoke Childcare Mapping Tool and Childcare Pressure Points research, which we shared at a multi-agency approach to establish a wider collaborative response on meeting local childcare demand.

A special thanks to our whole KCCC team on a fantastic year. Your commitment and dedication was a key driver in providing a high level of support, guidance and training. Additionally, thank you to our Board members for your commitment to KCCC in a voluntary capacity. We are grateful for your service and your commitment to good governance that supported myself and our team to continue to meet and exceed our actions in 2024 and beyond. We send well wishes to staff who moved on in 2024 and thank them for their contribution during their time with Kildare County Childcare Committee.

Our team would like to thank everyone involved in the childcare sector in Kildare who, every year, go above and beyond in supporting all children and families to access childcare. Your passion, endless commitment and positivity always shines through when we engage with you all. We do not take it for granted that we have such a dedicated group of professionals, who support KCCC's mission, in striving to ensure that early childhood is understood as a significant and distinct time in life that must be valued, nurtured and respected so that every child and their families in Kildare have equal access to the highest quality childcare within their local communities.

Julie McNamara

CEO



About Kildare County Childcare Committee

Our Vision

Through the leadership of Kildare County Childcare Committee, early childhood is understood as a significant and distinct time in life that must be valued, nurtured and respected, where every child in Kildare has equal access to the highest quality education and childcare experiences within their local communities.

Our Mission

KCCC strives to ensure that early childhood is understood as a significant and distinct time in life that must be valued, nurtured and respected, and that every child in Kildare has equal access to the highest quality education and childcare experiences within their local communities.

Our Values

Kildare County Childcare Committee (KCCC) have agreed the following Organisational Values

As a member of KCCC, directors promise to abide by the fundamental values that underpin all the activities of this organisation.

Child Centred: Everything we do is driven by the welfare of children.

Inclusive: We value the diversity within our local communities in County Kildare and promote opportunities for participation and equal access for all.

Respectful: We listen and treat everyone fairly keeping an open mind.

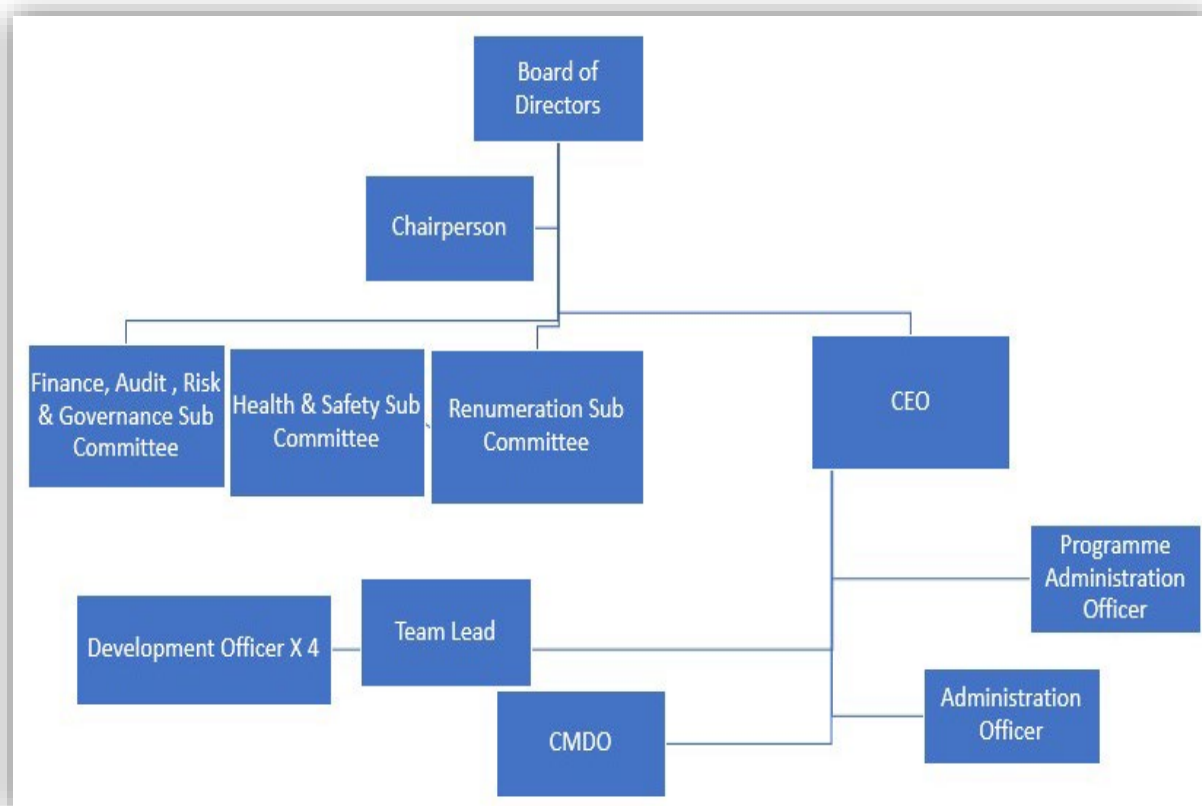
Collaborative: Together we are better and create a greater impact.

Accountable: We are responsible for our decisions and contributions.

Supportive: We are encouraging, helpful and seek to bring value to all we engage with

Our Structure

We are operated as a not-for-profit organisation, governed by a Board of Directors.



KCCC Salary Scales

Childcare Committee Salary Scales are aligned to local authority salary scales, which were as follows as at 1st October 2024; source Forsa.ie.

Senior executive officer/county & city librarian/head of information systems/financial accountant/management accountant/financial & management accountant
78,593 - 79,294 - 82,378 - 85,481 - 88,590 - 91,667 - 94,762 - LSI1 98,273 - LSI2 103,868
Grade 7 - Administrative officer/senior executive librarian
58,252 - 59,677 - 61,341 - 63,011 - 64,680 - 66,172 - 67,700 - 69,179 - 70,656 - LSI1 73,185 - LSI2 75,728
Grade 6 - Senior staff officer/executive librarian/senior legal assistant/clerk of works/building inspector
55,641 - 56,969 - 58,586 - 61,629 - 63,447 - LSI1 65,706 - LSI2 67,977
Grade 5 - Staff officer/librarian/legal assistant
50,206 - 51,705 - 53,236 - 54,799 - 56,374 - LSI1 58,209 - LSI2 60,051
Grade 4 - Assistant staff officer/senior library assistant
34,260 - 36,366 - 39,355 - 41,318 - 43,035 - 44,696 - 46,938 - 48,560 - 50,206 - LSI1 51,733 - LSI2 53,301
Grade 3 - Clerical officer/library assistant/branch librarian*
29,811 - 31,543 - 31,972 - 32,836 - 34,101 - 35,367 - 36,634 - 37,553 - 38,596 - 39,803 - 40,661 - 41,860 - 43,065 - 45,334 - LSI1 46,945

Our Governance

Kildare County Childcare Committee has adopted the Charities Governance Code.

See <https://www.charitiesregulator.ie/en>

We seek to offer transparency on all aspects of our organisation. Full information on all of the following areas is available on our website (click to follow links):

Our Board & Staff: <https://www.kccc.ie/Our-Members>

Our Financial Records and Annual Reports: <https://www.kccc.ie/Governance/>

Our Complaints Procedure: <https://www.kccc.ie/Governance/Complaints> **Our**

Privacy Policy: <https://www.kccc.ie/Privacy-Policy>

Our Funding

We are funded directly by Pobal, a government agency (<https://www.pobal.ie/>), with close operational links with the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY).

<https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-children-disability-and-equality/>

Kildare County Childcare Committee

2024 End of Year Progress Report

Reflection on overall progress/achievement for the year

In 2024, the KCCC team strengthened relationships with childcare service owners/managers, ECCE educators, childminders, and parents. We achieved our objectives and implemented actions from the KCCC Strategic Plan 2023–2026. The team engaged with services over 1,100 times via email, phone, and in-person FIA support, and recorded 700 interactions supporting the FRSP action. Through the National Action Plan for Childminding efforts, we increased known childminders to over 100 via social media campaigns, CPD, and local networks. We welcomed 16 new services in Kildare, including 3 CICs (one under new ownership). Additionally, we supported new communities in over 10 Designated Emergency Accommodation Centres with CYPSC-funded play and stay sessions, childcare information, and ECCE career guidance. Most KCCC training is delivered in person and remains well attended.

Details of any changes/obstacles that impacted on the work

Core Funding tasks such as Implementing Fee Increase Application (FIA) and administering the Finance Report Support Payment (FRSP) during ECCE fee reviews proved challenging, with actions postponed and revised multiple times in Q3/4. KCCC used innovation and determination to meet service needs in partnership with DCEDIY. The ECCE fee review was delayed until December due to FIA and late programme readiness, and many reviews may need re-checking. Communication pathways for programme queries were unclear and time-consuming; Grey areas in rules and contradictions arising from multiple funding streams remain problematic. In 2025, faster, clearer communication is needed.

Details of key highlights/successes identified in 2024.

Kildare Children and Young People's Services Committee (KCYPSC) and KCCC conducted research to identify local childcare pressure points using a mapping tool, providing data to planners/Kildare County Council. The Early Years Initiative supported 32 P&T groups in Kildare and three in Designated Emergency Accommodation Centres. With KCYPSC International Protection Accommodation Service funding, KCCC delivered play and arts packs to children and families in Designated Accommodation Centres and organised arts events for those in emergency accommodation. Three KCCC team members qualified as Restorative Practices Trainers to help services foster emotionally healthy relationships with staff and parents. Additionally, the KCCC info officer assisted Ukrainian families in accessing childcare, including National Childcare Scheme sponsorship, in their home language.

In the Spring 2024, KCCC offered childminders and children in the Athy area an Arts and Ecology programme. The programme was organised in collaboration with the Creative Arts division in Kildare County Council. The aim of the project was to create a pilot staffed local network for childminders and build relationships with them and the community at large in a particularly hard-to-reach community. KCCC's goal was to bring information and supports in relation to the National Action Plan for Childminders (2021-2028) to the local community and to promote its services in general.

The Childminding Development Officer had overall operational responsibility and liaised with programme facilitators, sponsors, participants and other stakeholders. Extensive outreach work was carried out with the local primary school, library, parent and toddler groups and family resource centre to generate engagement. The key themes that fed into childminding practice supports and engagement were:

- Relationships and interactions and early friendships
- Unhurried time and slow relational pedagogy
- Transitions
- Sensory and hands-on experiences
- A connection to nature (citizenship) and the outdoor learning environment

Details of emerging patterns/trends identified over the year

Childcare Services continue to face staffing shortages, heavy administrative duties, and the impact of the fee freeze, particularly in long-established standalone services. Since 2023, there has been a rise in chain crèche openings (16 in 2024), compared to only two by owner-managers. Private School Age Childcare (SAC) services are also increasing, which is welcomed; however, the inclusion of Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) in SAC remains a priority. Some services have capped AIM places for various reasons. The Development Officer team has identified a need for training on inclusive routines, environments, and positive behaviour strategies. Parents failing to confirm or renew NCS awards is straining parent–service relationships. Throughout the year, parent inquiries grew, focusing on childcare access, NCS rules, attendance policies, AIM, and fee reviews related to changes in crèche fees or operating hours. There is also an increase in multilingual ECCE professionals attending Continuous Professional Development courses.

National and regional agencies and stakeholders collaborated with in 2024

Mother Tongues, Childhood Development Initiative, Restorative Practice Ireland, Citizens Information, WRC, and CCI.

Local agencies and stakeholders collaborated with in 2024

County Kildare Leadership Partnership, Local Authorities Integration Team, Community Integration Forum, Local Enterprise Office, Parents Support Forum, CFSN, CYPSC and its sub-groups, Creative Places Athy, Maynooth University, Kildare Forest School, Emergency Accommodation Centres, Intreo, Libraries, Gaelscoil Athy, Peter McVerry, Teach Tearmainn, Kildare County Council, LCDC.

CYPSC and KCCC collaborated to distribute My Place to Play packs across all children and family services in Kildare. They shared research on the Childcare Mapping Tool and Childcare Pressure Points with KCC and DCEDIY to support a multi-agency approach in meeting local childcare demand. KCCC regularly attends Local Area Integration Team meetings and tracks weekly numbers of children from Ukraine and IPAS Centres to plan for needs. Access to weekly data on children in homelessness accommodation would further help KCCC support access to ECCE. Using case management tools, KCCC, Pobal, and DCEDIY successfully supported a community crèche facing sustainability challenges, with the service expressing positive feedback about the support received.

Details of additional actions/local needs delivered outside the LIP/Statement of Work

The Early Years Initiative coordinated the Baba Loves Music event and My Place to Play distribution while providing in-person support to 32 P&T groups. In 2024, KCCC delivered Restorative Practices training to 24 ECCE professionals, promoting emotionally healthy relationships among educators, leaders, and parents to reduce conflicts and strengthen connections. The KCCC team supported Designated Accommodation Centres in accessing NCS-sponsored childcare places and local P&T groups. Core Funding increased administrative duties. Community crèche support meetings were reestablished quarterly, helping services maintain strong governance and high-quality care. KCCC also shared information on the Building Blocks grant directly with chairs and managers to encourage the development of additional community childcare places in Kildare.

Governance

8 Board meetings were held in 2024 including the AGM.

Board meetings in 2024 were well attended, with directors bringing diverse skills to support the CEO and team in meeting SOW obligations to a high standard. Board and staff met twice to strengthen relationships. The Board welcomed the CEO back from long-term leave and expressed gratitude for the team's dedication and hard work in her absence. Funding structures, particularly addendums, remain a major challenge, complicating staffing plans and requiring multiple budget re-submissions, increasing the administrative burden. The recommend full annual funding will be confirmed by November each year to allow adequate time for recruitment, contract renewals, and strategic planning.

The Board is the governing body of KCCC. It is required to satisfy that the appropriate systems, procedures and practices are in place and for the management of the performance of the CEO.

The Board is required to act on a fully informed and ethical basis, in good faith, with due diligence and care and in the best interest of KCCC, having due regard to its legal responsibilities and objectives. It is the responsibility of the CEO to ensure that the Board is provided with the necessary information to enable it to perform its functions.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2024 - ATTENDANCE RECORD								
NAME	Jan	March	May	AGM	July	Sept	Oct	Dec
Edel Smyth	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	0
Yvonne Darragh	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Ed Drew	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Nicola McDonnell	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Edelle McMonagle		0	1	1	0	1	1	1
Raymond Fullam		1	1	1	1	1	1	0
Ciaran Scanlon	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1
	4	5	6	6	3	7	5	5

1 = Attended

0= Apology non-attendance

Blank space = no apology rcd

Resigned(R) - Date notified

Staffing

The KCCC team participate in Continuous Professional Development to effectively meet SOW objectives and local service needs. Between July and December 2024, two DOs completed Master's degrees in ECCE and Teaching and Learning, one DO completed a TOT course for training facilitation. Always Children First Designated Liaison Person TOT and First Aid Responder training were also completed. The KCCC Administrator resigned in November, and the EYI DO resigned in October. As Core Funding administration tasks for services continue to grow, so do KCCC's workplans

Financial Management

Budgets were monitored monthly.

Monthly bank reconciliations are maintained. Financial reports are provided at each Board meeting including a financial impact, budget, income and expenditure, credit card, and direct debit reports. In addition, Quarterly Reports are provided to Pobal in relation to funding received for the implementation of our SOW. A separate annual report is provided to Tusla.

Compliance with all legal and funder reporting requirements are adhered to and form part of the CEO report to the Board.

An appraisal committee assessed applications for small grants before being brought to the board of directors for final approval.

KCCC's full unabridged accounts for 2024 were given in draft form to the Finance, Audit and Risk Sub-Committee before being presented to the full Board of Directors at the AGM.

The audited financial statements are submitted to the Companies Registration Office alongside the annual return.

KCCC is registered with the Revenue Commissioners and operates PAYE/PRSI/USC in respect of all employees. Travel and Subsistence current rates are in line with Civil Service rates and included in our internal financial procedures.

Remuneration of all Staff is aligned to the Local Authority Grades 8 to 3. A defined pension scheme is provided by Zurich Life Assurance plc.

KCCC makes an employer's contribution of 10% to staff pensions.

An apportionment policy was adopted in 2019 and continues to be implemented in 2024.

A comprehensive analysis of KCCC's funding is available in the company's audited financial statements. These statements are available on our website www.kccc.ie/Governance

Conclusion

KCCC strengthened interagency relationships, promoting a multi-agency approach to help children access childcare and families connect with community support services. The staffing crisis remains the most significant challenge for services. KCCC participated in multiple interagency meetings, including Department of Social Protection and County Kildare Leadership Partnership events, to help address this issue. The Nurturing Skills fund was welcomed which supports upskilling, and the availability of free local QQI ELC courses is particularly welcomed. The ECCE, SAC, and CM sectors continue to evolve rapidly with policies such as Equal Start, AIM+, FRSP, Childminding Regulations, and new Hub na Óg and Critical Incident trainings introduced in 2024, which are all positive developments.

The Board and CEO have determined that the current addendum funding model is a barrier to success. While KCCC also receives Tusla funding to support Ukrainian and IPAS communities, our role as the lead agency in Kildare requires increased funding. Without a budget increase, growth is stifled and capacity is limited.

We will continue to facilitate community crèche support meetings with chairs and managers to help services remain sustainable and pursue Building Blocks grants to expand community childcare places. KCCC remains committed to achieving SOW objectives with a local focus, particularly through in-person training.

Aligned with our 2023–2026 Strategic Plan, we will continue meeting local service needs, sourcing alternative funding where possible, and advocating for increased core budget support from DCEDIY.

With emergency accommodation centres expanding in Kildare, we secured external funding for two full-time posts in 2025 to support vulnerable families with young children. These posts will provide information on the benefits of play in Emergency Accommodation Centres, promote local P&T groups, and connect families to community support agencies. We plan to implement an evidence-based Early Intervention and Prevention programme within P&T groups and Emergency Centres for children experiencing homelessness or humanitarian crises.

In partnership with interagency teams, we will use the childcare mapping tool to guide childcare service development. Additionally, we will restructure our team to ensure effective governance and management.

There is a critical need for large capital grants, especially to support new Community Childcare provision, as Kildare has only 5% of such services—the lowest nationally. KCCC continues collaborating with DSP, FRCs, CKLP, and LEO to share information on setting up childminding and centre-based childcare services and how KCCC supports new providers. However, significant capital funding is needed to establish new FDC, SAC, and P/T services, as current local housing estate childcare development does not meet CRO birth rate demands.

KCCC seeks access to data on crèches built but unopened in estates, to better respond to TD inquiries about delays, though currently we have no role or data access regarding opening timelines. We also welcome access to live data on childcare places in Kildare to better meet family needs and support planners.

A national communication campaign on NCS is still needed for parents, clarifying the three NCS types and related administrative tasks like CHICK confirmation and renewal. KCCC continues to share this information via social media and interagency meetings.

KCCC's team and board partnered with services, families, and interagencies to achieve the 2024 SOW objectives to a high standard, using an innovative, relational approach aligned with the 2023–2026 Strategic Plan. Together with interagency partners, we provide comprehensive support, training, and information to childcare and education services, childminders, Parent and Toddler groups, and DACs across Kildare, aiming to ensure equal access to childcare and subsidy information for all families.

Our social media and website traffic grew, with more childminders and parents seeking support, and the number of centre-based services increased to 195. We look forward to continuing to meet Kildare's growing community needs in 2025 and are pleased to welcome two full-time externally funded roles to support children and families in P&T groups and DACs in the new year.

Tel: 045 861307 **Email:** info@kccc.ie **Web:** www.kccc.ie

RCN: 20054175 CRO: 35591 CHY: 15585

Chairperson: Ed Drew

Directors: Ed Drew, Edel Smyth, Yvonne Darragh, Nicola McDonnell, Raymond

Fullam, Edelle McMonagle.

Company Secretary Edel Smyth



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