



Bright Start: the Executive's Programme for Affordable and Integrated Childcare

School Age Childcare Grant Scheme

Overview

Bright Start: the Executive's Programme for Affordable and Integrated Childcare (A Strategic Framework and Key First Actions)

School Age Childcare Grant Scheme

Round 3 – Targeted at Schools and New Provision

Introduction

1. School Age Childcare services provide childcare for children aged 4-14 in the hours before and after the school day and during school holidays. Relevant services include breakfast clubs, after school clubs and summer schemes.
2. **Consultation and research undertaken to inform the *Bright Start* Childcare Strategy highlighted School Age Childcare (SAC) as the biggest area of unmet need in Northern Ireland.**
3. In order to address this, three of *Bright Start's* 15 Key First Actions focus on increasing or safeguarding SAC provision.
 - **Key first action 1** aims to sustain or create 3,000 SAC places addressing the childcare needs of disadvantaged communities.
 - **Key first action 2** aims to create 2-3,000 new SAC places in new facilities based on the schools estate.
 - **Key first action 5** aims to create up to 1,000 new SAC places addressing the childcare needs of rural communities.

School Age Childcare Grant Scheme

4. This Grant Scheme has been developed to deliver on these three Key First Actions. It will fund existing and prospective SAC providers whose projects are relevant to achieving the Key First Actions.

5. Only SAC providers that operate on a social economy model, or plan to do so, will be eligible to apply for assistance under this scheme. Providers that operate on a conventional business model are not eligible under the present scheme. A social enterprise is:

A business with primarily social objectives, whose surpluses are principally reinvested for that purpose in the business, rather than being driven by the need to maximise profits for shareholders.

An SAC facility operating on the social economy model is one whose surpluses are reinvested solely for the purposes of its SAC activities.

Eligibility

6. Applications for grants are invited from the following:
- (i) Existing SAC providers operating on a social economy basis whose settings are (a) located in an area in the top 25% most disadvantaged¹; (b) and/or serving disadvantaged families²; and (c) aiming to create new SAC places.

¹ Post code information will be used to determine whether a project is based in the top 25% most disadvantaged areas. For the purposes of this grant scheme, a disadvantaged area is one located in the top 25% most disadvantaged Super Output Areas (SOAs) based on Income Deprivation Affecting Children (IDAC). IDAC is the proportion of children in an area who are living in income deprived households.

² A project's ability to serve disadvantaged families will be assessed in terms of the proportion of parents it aims to attract who are eligible for tax credit support with the costs of childcare. For projects located in the top 25% most disadvantaged areas, this should be 50% of parents or more. For projects located outside the top-25%, this should be 30% of parents or more.

- (ii) Prospective SAC providers operating on a social economy basis whose settings are (a) located in an area in the top 25% most disadvantaged (defined at Annex 1); (b) and/or serving disadvantaged families; and (c) aim to create new SAC places.
- (iii) Prospective SAC providers who intend to operate on a social economy basis and whose settings will be based on the schools estate.
- (iv) Prospective SAC providers who intend to operate on a social economy basis and whose settings will be based in a rural area or largely serve those living in rural areas.
- (v) Existing SAC providers:
 - a) who do not currently operate on a social economy basis but intend to do so; and
 - b) whose setting is based in an area in the top 25% most disadvantaged and/or serving disadvantaged families; and
 - c) who aim to create new SAC places.

Grants

- 7. Grants are available for capital expenditure (premises and equipment), for revenue (running costs), or both. **Revenue grants are available for up to three years.** With regard to revenue grants, projects will be able to apply for the shortfall between fee income and running costs subject to the thresholds outlined below.
- 8. Grants are subject to the following thresholds:
 - (i) For revenue grants, covering running costs:
 - a) Up to 25% of running costs per annum (c. £17,500 p.a.) for new or existing projects that will be based in areas in the top 25% most disadvantaged and/or benefit disadvantaged families.

- b) For new SAC projects - schools estate or rural - up to 20% of running costs in Year 1 (c. £14,000); up to 15% in Year 2 (c. £10,500); and up to 10% in Year 3 (c. £7,000).
 - (ii) One-off capital grants of up to £30,000 to cover the cost of bringing SAC premises up to the minimum standard required by DHSSPS.
9. Grants are available for the following:
- (i) Expansion of an existing SAC setting to enable it to create new places.
 - (ii) Sustaining an existing SAC setting to safeguard the places it currently provides.
 - (iii) Enabling a new SAC setting to start up.
 - (iv) Enabling a new or existing setting to create SAC places for children with a disability.
 - (v) Enabling an SAC setting to move to a social economy model **and** create or sustain places.
 - (vi) Business support associated with any of the above activities.

Application and Assessment Process

10. Applicants will be expected to set out the detail of their proposal, including the following:
- The amount of grant required.
 - The time period that the grant will cover.
 - The purpose of the grant - what it will be used to purchase, including any capital expenditure.
 - The type of childcare service that will be provided.
 - The hours - and times of the year - during which the childcare services will be provided.
 - The fee structure, including maximum and minimum fees.
 - Actual and/or expected staff qualifications.

11. All applications will be assessed and scored according to relevant criteria.
12. The Grant Scheme will be delivered by the Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) Childcare Partnerships on behalf of OFMDFM. The Partnerships will carry out an eligibility check and a scoring exercise on each application, selecting those that best meet the criteria for funding.
13. Applicants whose project is not selected for funding will be offered feedback. Alternatively, they can appeal the selection panel's decision. Appeals will be considered by Partnership members not involved in the original decision.

Selection Criteria

14. *Bright Start* has four objectives. To:
 - (i) Promote the well-being of all children in support of their developmental needs.
 - (ii) Enable parents, particularly women, to: enter or remain in the workforce; to train for work; or to study, thereby contributing to enhanced economic activity, greater gender equality and reduced child poverty.
 - (iii) Recognise the diversity of childcare needs.
 - (iv) Offer parents flexibility and choice.
15. In addition to demonstrating compliance with the eligibility criteria above, all applicants will need to demonstrate how their proposed expenditure will contribute to the above objectives, to the longer term *Bright Start* vision, and to the achievement of integrated and affordable childcare.
16. Applicants will also be required to demonstrate how their proposal will contribute to the achievement of the key first actions set out above, including how many places they will contribute to the overall target of 5-7,000 SAC places sustained or created.

17. Finally, applicants must demonstrate the following:

- i. **Need:** The need for the proposed project must be clearly established and described, with reference to available statistics and research where possible. Projects should demonstrate clearly that they do not **duplicate** or **displace** existing provision.
- ii. **Value for Money:** Proposals should be realistically costed.
- iii. **Additionality:** Proposals must be additional - i.e. without the grant, the project: (a) would not be possible; (b) would be undertaken at a later date; (c) or would be undertaken on a reduced scale.
- iv. **Sustainability:** Proposals will need to demonstrate how, and in what timeframe, they aim to cover their costs through fees charged for their services. (It is recognised that projects serving communities in the greatest need will not, in the short term, be able to cover all of their costs through fees). Projects will need to demonstrate how they will promote uptake of government financial assistance with the costs of childcare (tax credits and vouchers) among their clients.
- v. **Affordability:** Applicants will need to demonstrate that any fees set reflect the ability to pay of parents and carers in the setting's catchment area.
- vi. **Accessibility:** Projects will need to be accessible to parents/carers and to children.
- vii. **Integration:** Proposals will need to demonstrate that they complement, rather than duplicate or displace, existing SAC provision. Generally, they should complement relevant government initiatives.
- viii. **Quality:** Proposals will need to demonstrate that they will offer a quality service to parents/carers and children by engaging suitably qualified staff and offering a stimulating and nurturing environment that contributes to the development of the children involved. Projects based on the schools estate will need to demonstrate that the service they offer is separate from the regular school day.

- ix. **Sharing:** All projects, including projects based on the school estate, should if possible demonstrate how they will contribute to government's aim to build a united community.
18. All applications will be assessed using the following scoring system based on the criteria outlined above.

NOTE – the following could change depending on adaptations to Guidance and Application form

Bright Start School Age Childcare Grant Scheme: scoring system

	Criterion	Maximum Score	Weighting	Weighted Score
1	Key First Action Targets			
	Sustaining or creating SAC places	20	1.5	30
2	Efficiency and Effectiveness			
	Addressing need	30	1.5	30
	Value for money	30	1.5	30
	Additionality	10	1	20
	Sustainability	30	1.5	30
	Affordability	20	1	20
	Social Economy	20		
3	Other Selection Criteria			
	Accessibility	10	0.5	10
	Complementary with other Government Initiatives	10	0.5	10
	Quality	10	0.5	10
	Shared Community	10	0.5	10
		200		200

- (i) Only projects scoring 65% on Key First Action targets criterion, and 65% on the Efficiency and Effectiveness criteria, and 65% overall, will be eligible for funding.
- (ii) Projects should also demonstrate that they are in line with the *Bright Start* objectives - indicate 'Yes' or 'No'

Bright Start Objectives	
<i>Supporting children's developmental needs</i>	
<i>Enabling parents to enter or remain in the workforce</i>	
<i>Recognising the diversity of childcare needs</i>	
<i>Offering parents flexibility and choice</i>	

How to Apply

19. Application forms and guidance for applicants can be downloaded from the following website:

<http://www.hscboard.hscni.net/brightstart>

20. Completed applications should be sent to:

(i) By Post:

Adele Mooney
Health & Social Care Board
Gransha Park House
15 Gransha Park
Clooney Road
Londonderry BT47 6FN

Or

(ii) By Email:

childcare.applications@hscni.net

21. If you wish to discuss any aspect of the Grant Scheme or the application process, please contact Angela Stallard on 028 9080 3380.