



EDUCATION AND CARE

ECU NEWSLETTER

15 March 2023

GENERAL TOPICS

Changes to Assessment and Rating

From 1 May 2023, there will be some changes to A&R in Tasmania, in line with national changes, including:

- Reduced notice periods
- Greater use of partial reassessments (for services with a current 2018 NQS rating)
- Increased focus on services' quality improvement journey, including the QIP, as an ongoing process.

For further information about the changes please see the following information sheets:

- [Making quality assessment and rating more effective \(PDF, 780KB\)](#)
- [Changes to assessment and rating in 2023 \(PDF, 780KB\)](#)

The ECU will be requesting that all services submit their current QIP through the NQAITS portal by the end of April 2023 and are currently developing additional resources to support services through this process.

Are you aware of your obligations to report complaints?

Approved providers are required to notify the regulatory authority of certain operational changes, incidents and complaints, in line with Section 174 of the *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010* (the National Law.) Regulation 175 of the National

Regulations outlines what is prescribed to be notified to the regulatory authority, including any complaint alleging that:

- a serious incident has occurred or is occurring at an education and care service, or
- that the National Law has not, or is not, being complied with.

Complaints can come in many forms, but essentially it is a communication stating something about a provider or service is unsatisfactory. A complaint may be verbal or documented and may be raised by:

- a staff member
- parent or
- a community member.

Approved providers are required to have systems and processes in place to adequately address complaints (Regulation 168(2)(o)).

The intent of the National Law and National Regulations is to ensure regulatory authorities are notified of:

- serious incidents
- complaints and
- circumstances where the health, safety or wellbeing of children may have been compromised.

A complaint is not required to be substantiated prior to notifying the ECU, the obligation sits with the approved provider notifying when they are made aware of the complaint, not when, or if they have confirmed it to be valid

Regulatory Authorities are notified of these situations so that they can conduct an independent assessment and where required, take appropriate action.

Approved providers should submit notifications online using the NQA ITS or by contacting the ECU, within the appropriate timeframes outlined in Regulation 176.

Serious incidents and complaints are required to be notified within 24 hours.

For information on notification types and timeframes, please refer to [Notification Types and Timeframes \(ACECQA.gov.au\)](#).

Persons with management or control – Assessing proof of identity

The ECU assesses individuals' fitness and propriety to be involved as a person with management or control of an approved service. This is done when an application for a new provider or a notification to add persons with management or control to an existing approved provider is received. This may also be done at any time the ECU considers it necessary to reassess an individual's fitness and propriety.

One step in the process of the assessment is to validate the authenticity of the proof of identity document that has been provided. This is done through the Document Verification Service (DVS). The ECU commenced using the DVS in 2022 to support national consistency and as agreed in the Joined-up Approvals Project.

To enable this check to be conducted, any drivers licence or marriage certificate that is submitted needs to contain both the front and the back of the card or document. This is due to validation numbers contained on the back, that the DVS requires to run the verification check on the authenticity of a document.

Provision of these details in full at the time of submission of an application or notification relating to persons with management or control will support timely processing by the ECU and remove the need for subsequent requests for this to be provided.

NQF Induction eLearning Modules

The ECU has identified that a number of recent compliance matters involving breaches for the approved provider can be attributed to gaps in induction processes.

We would like to remind providers that ACECQA's [NQF eLearning modules \(ACECQA.gov.au\)](#) are a great tool to use in the induction of new educators, or as a refresher for existing staff.

The four modules each cover a different aspect of the NQF and have been developed to support educators' understanding of their role within the education and care sector.

Mental Health and Wellbeing webinars

In response to sector feedback calling for additional support for recognising and improving mental health and wellbeing in children, the NSW Department of Education has engaged some external partners to run a series of free mental health and wellbeing webinars.

The webinars cover:

- Growing a Mentally Healthy Community
- Educator Wellbeing, Understanding Mental Health in Early Childhood and Effective Communication
- Understanding Mental Health in Early Childhood

You can view recordings of the webinars on [the NSW Government website](#).

You'll also find downloadable resources to help promote positive social and emotional wellbeing and safe environments for children, educators and families.

Early Learning for 3-year-olds – upcoming workshops

The Early Learning for 3-year-olds Co-Design Planning Group is holding a series of workshops across Tasmania in a range of local communities. The

workshops will seek to engage and co-design with families, local communities and service providers.

They will occur in March through to early April 2023 and will be an opportunity to have a say on quality and affordable early learning for 3-year-olds.

The ECU encourages all interested service providers to get involved. Details of the workshops are available at [Early Learning for 3-year-olds Workshops \(decyp.tas.gov.au\)](https://decyp.tas.gov.au/early-learning-for-3-year-olds-workshops).

The ECU will continue to share updates as the work of the Co-Design Planning Group progresses. If you have any queries in the meantime, please contact spp.admin@decyp.tas.gov.au.

Working Together – Implementation Phase 2024

The next implementation phase of the *Working Together – supporting early learning* initiative, which supports opportunities for eligible children in the year before Kindergarten to participate in free, quality early learning through partner ECEC services, will occur from 2024 onwards.

The 2024 implementation phase involves increasing the number of places to 240, focused on introducing Working Together into areas of Tasmania where it is not currently delivered (while maintaining service levels in current areas).

To support new services and communities to be onboarded into Working Together and support children being oriented into services in February 2024, DECYP will:

- I. April – May 2023: Hold a Request for Tender (RFT) process (and associated state-wide information sessions) to identify ECEC centre-based, long day care services interested in taking part in Working Together in 2024.
 - All services (both current and potential new service partners) wanting to be a Working Together service partner in

2024 will need to take part in this RFT process.

- This RFT will be released through [the Tasmanian Government's tenders website \(tenders.tas.gov.au\)](https://tenders.tas.gov.au) and all Tasmanian ECEC services will receive a direct email notifying them that the RFT is open.
 - This process will offer long-term contracts to services to be a Working Together partner from 2024 onward.
 - This process aims to identify sufficient services to support 120 new places annually.
2. June 2023: Offer and sign contracts with services successful through the RFT process.
 3. July – September 2023: Onboard new services, recruit new Engagement and Inclusion Workers and engage with children and families in new communities to identify potential enrolments for 2024.
 4. October – December 2023: Engage with ECEC service partners to agree on 2024 enrolments.
 5. February 2024: Children and families are oriented into services.

Please contact Simon Hammond, Project Manager – Strategic Projects and Initiatives on 0421 674 070 or simon.hammond@decyp.tas.gov.au for further information.

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