17th July 2022   
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‎Ms. Sharon Conroy

[info@sdublincoco.ie](mailto:info@sdublincoco.ie)   
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‎Dear Ms. Conroy,  
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Thank you for your email on behalf of the Clondalkin Area Committee regarding the lack of childcare placements in Newcastle and the surrounding areas.

The availability of high-quality early learning and childcare that is affordable and accessible is a key Government priority.Before the onset of Covid-19, national data indicated that supply of early learning and childcare places was broadly meeting demand, though there was evidence of undersupply cohorts of children and in certain areas.

Data gathered throughout the Covid-19 pandemic revealed lower demand for early learning and childcare. Indeed, data captured in June 2021 found significant vacancy rates across the country – with the national vacancy rate averaging at 21% and a vacancy rate in South Dublin Local authority of 18%. The Department has continued to monitor early learning and childcare capacity, with a particular focus on monitoring Covid-19 impacts as public health restrictions have been lifted and on responding to the unmet early learning and childcare needs of families.

﻿In April of this year, City/County Childcare Committee (CCC) undertook a nationwide survey of capacity in early learning and childcare services. This was followed in May by the Early Years Sector Profile Survey that is undertaken by Pobal annually on behalf of the Department. The City/County Childcare Committees across the country are also proactively engaging with early learning and childcare services to explore the potential for services in increase capacity where there is evidence of unmet early learning and childcare needs of families - with applications to Tusla to increase capacity in ELC services fast tracked, where possible.

Capacity data captured through the recent CCC survey and the Early Years Sector Profile Survey has been extracted and will be made available in the coming weeks. An initial analysis of these data show vacancy rates in Dublin South are now approximately 10%.

In addition to these efforts to monitor capacity issues across the country, the Department is planning a range of steps to address any issue of under supply. A new funding model, to roll out in September, will provide funding for services aligned to costs of delivery. Some €70m has been allocated to the Department through the revised National Development Plan (NDP) – with the majority of this funding earmarked for new places. Another important step being taken by the Department, in partnership with the Department of Housing Planning and Local Government (DHPLG), is to update the 2001 Planning Guidelines for Local Authorities on Early Learning and Childcare Settings. In addition, CCC are currently proactively engaging with early learning and childcare services to identify unused capacity and explore the potential for services in increase capacity where there is evidence of unmet early learning and childcare needs of families.

Parents experiencing difficulty in relation to their early learning and childcare needs should contact their local City/County Childcare Committee (CCC) for assistance. Contact details for CCCs may be found on [www.myccc.ie](https://eur04.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.myccc.ie%2F&data=05%7C01%7Clmaher%40SDUBLINCOCO.ie%7C05f3125bba204867ac3908da6a454073%7C6a3c00c019d0492da8de95fad8fda1d4%7C0%7C0%7C637939142906131873%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=7XN0ECdVInEhplTcHoQjazAGURG9MgVEhyi2iZdRUkY%3D&reserved=0).

**Data**

Vacancy Rate by County (April/May 2022)

(NOTE the maximum number of places and the number of vacant places are based on survey data that has not been extrapolated)

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| **Capacity and Vacant Places April/May 2022** | | | |
| ﻿ | **Max capacity** | **Vacant places** | **Vacancy rate** |
| South Dublin | 11853 | 1188 | 10.0% |

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Yours sincerely  
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‎Lisa Hughes

Private Secretary to Minister Roderic O’Gorman TD