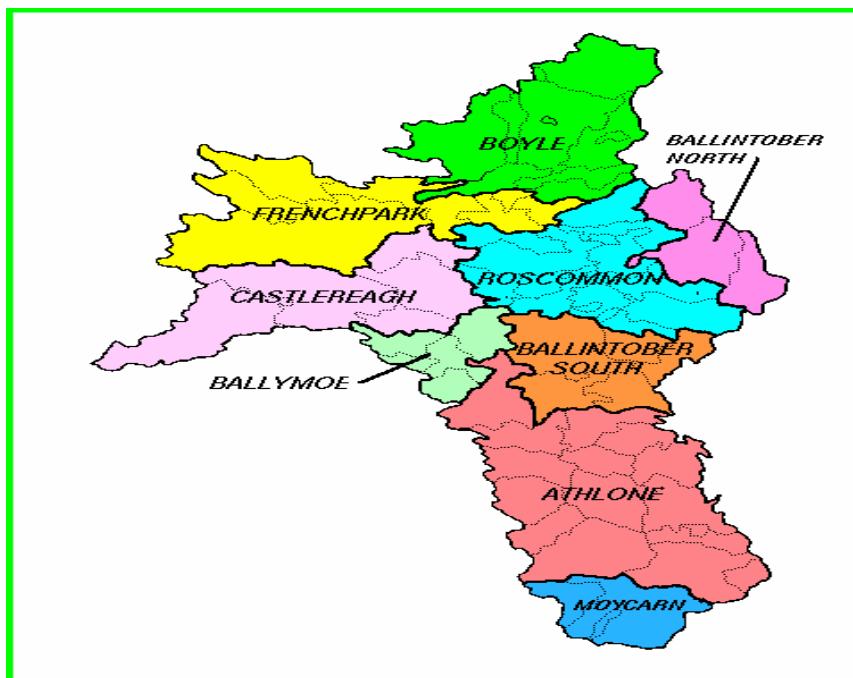


# Profile of the Early Learning and Care Sector in County Roscommon



## ROSCOMMON COUNTY CHILDCARE COMMITTEE CLG

©Roscommon County Childcare Committee

## **Background and Context:**

Roscommon County Childcare Committee CLG (Roscommon CCC) was established in 2002 and is a partnership of the statutory, voluntary, community, and private sectors, including parents and families, working together for the enhancement of Early Learning and Care (ELC) in County Roscommon.

Roscommon CCC is the first point of contact at local county level for the public in seeking advice, information or support on ELC and work in partnership to achieve positive change with our local and national partners, providers and key stakeholders while coordinating the implementation of National Childcare Policy at local level on behalf of the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DECDIY).

## **The role of Roscommon CCC is to:**

- (a) Act as the local agent of the DECDIY in the coordination and delivery of the national early learning and care programmes and the implementation of government policy at a local level in County Roscommon.
- (b) Facilitate and support the development of quality, accessible early learning and care and school age childcare services for the overall benefit of children and their parents.
- (c) Provide support and guidance to local service providers and parents in relation to the childcare programmes, and support quality in keeping with national frameworks and policy objectives.
- (d) Facilitate the development of Early Learning and Care and School Age Childcare in a strategic and coordinated manner.

## **Mission Statement**

The mission of Roscommon County Childcare Committee is to develop, support and enhance a wide range of high quality, inclusive, integrated, accessible and affordable

childhood care and education services responsive to the rights and needs of children and provide support to parents/guardians/families. We recognise the role of Quality Early Childhood Care and Education in Strengthening Families, Communities and Society in County Roscommon. The Board will support management in overall governance in line with the Governance Code.

We will work in partnership to achieve positive change with our partners, providers and key stakeholders while coordinating the implementation of National Childcare Policy at local level on behalf of the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth.

### **Our Ethos**

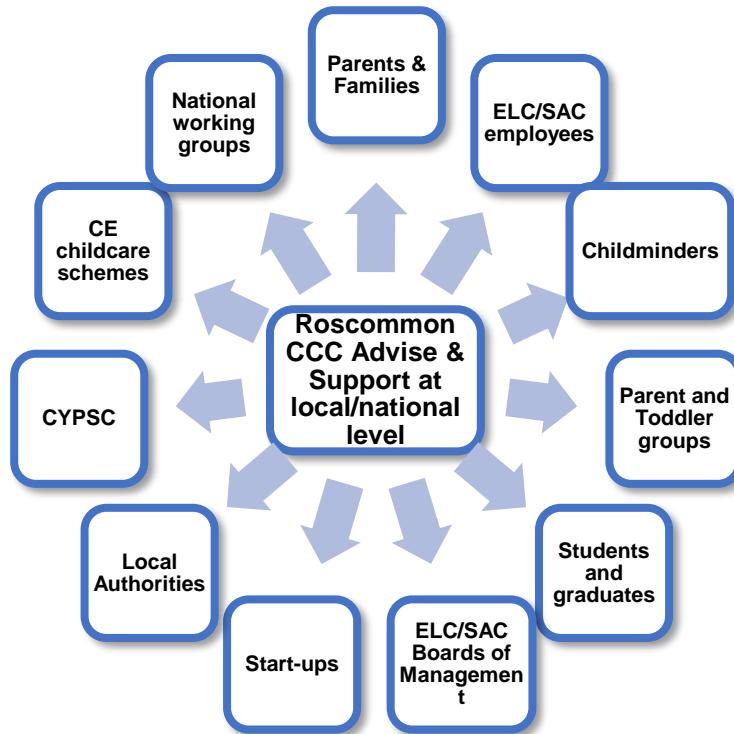
- To be child and youth friendly in all its policies and actions
- To promote an integrated, responsive service to children, young people and their families from birth, which has at its core the wellbeing and welfare of the child and treats all persons as equals
- To have a commitment to high quality, flexible and locally-based services
- To facilitate the development of childcare services as a partnership between children, parents, the community, providers and statutory agencies.
- To operate in an efficient and effective manner
- To support, maintain and continuously improve a culture of learning and professional development among the staff of Roscommon County Childcare Committee CLG

Roscommon CCC is acknowledged as the experts in childcare/ELC at local authority level and the 'one-stop-shop' for anything related to childcare. All local member agencies contact us if they have a childcare/ELC query.

Local authorities – Roscommon CCC advise on planning matters; regulation, qualification; refugee resettlement; childcare need.

Children & Young People Services Committee (CYPSC) – Roscommon CCC support local initiatives by being an active member of the Roscommon CYPSC.

The graph below shows the supports Roscommon CCC deliver through our Local Implementation Plan (LIP)/Statement of Work (SOW)

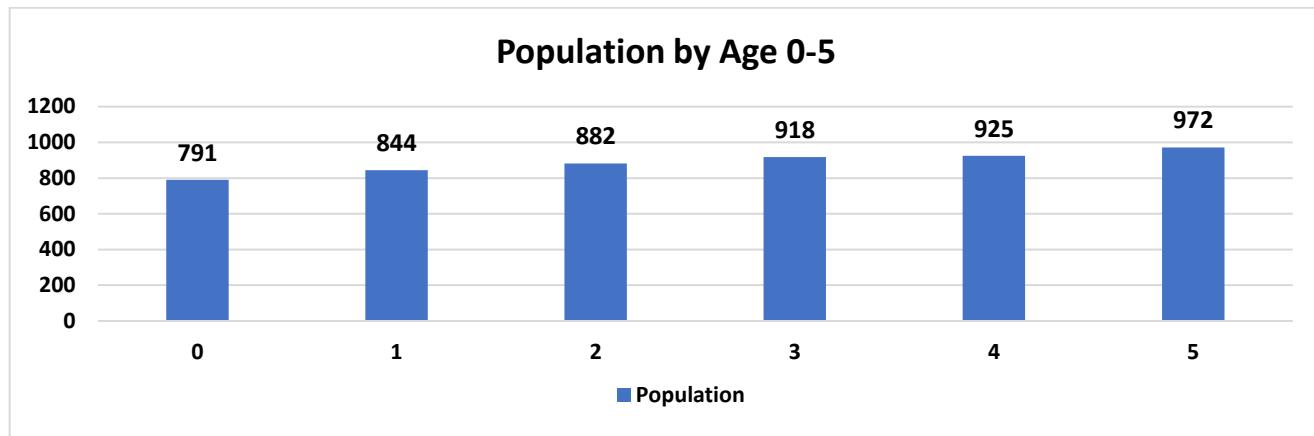


### **Demographic profile of county Roscommon**

County Roscommon has an area of 2,548.4 km<sup>2</sup> / 629,715.7 acres / 983.9 square miles.

Roscommon is the third most rural county in Ireland with 74 % of the population living in rural areas. During the period 2011 to 2016, the population of County Roscommon grew by 479 people to 64,544 people. At 0.7%, the percentage growth during this period was significantly lower than the national figure of 3.8%. Within the county, Athlone LEA has seen the most consistent population growth over the past three intercensal periods. The population of Roscommon, enumerated in Census 2016 was 64,544, an increase of 479 or 0.7% since 2011 (Roscommon CYPSC, 2019). In 2016, 3,178 families in County

Roscommon had children aged 0-4 by 2020, these 4,360 have passed through the ELC sector and moved into National School and or School Aged Childcare (CSO, 2016). The chart below represents a breakdown of the number of children by age from Census 2016.

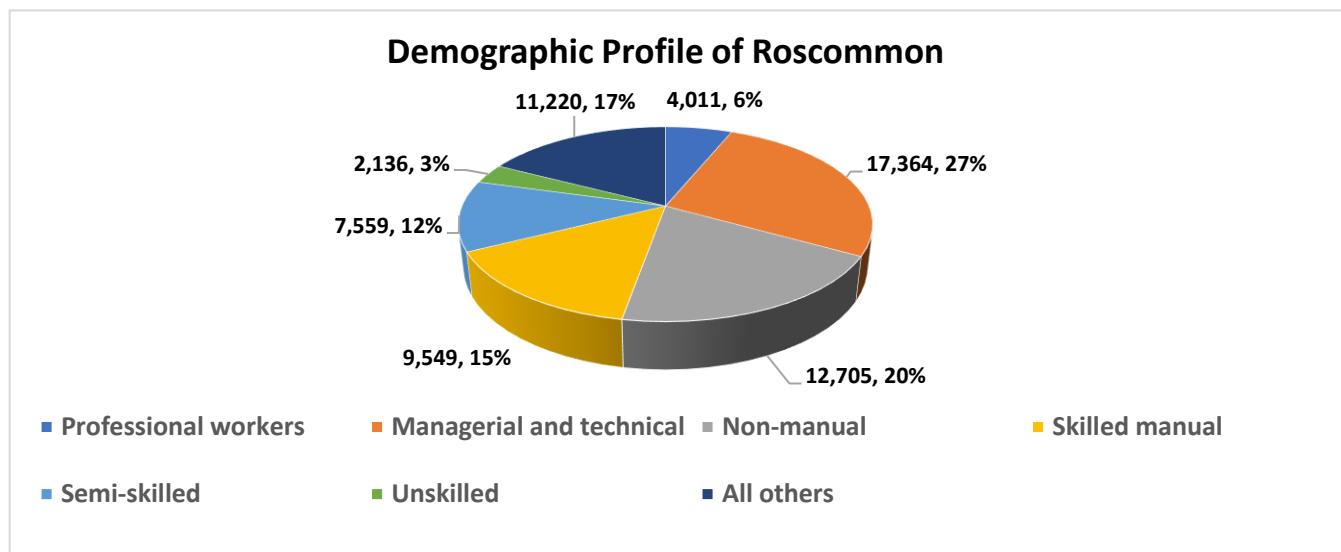


Source: Central Statistics Office Census 2016

## Deprivation Index

Roscommon has a deprivation index of -1.06 (Pobal Deprivation index 2018). This is reflected by the educational status of the residents with 840 people stating they have had no formal education and a further 5559 only completing national level. A further 7171 completed lower secondary education and 9064 completed upper second level. (CSO Census 2016) This equates to approximately a third of the population in Roscommon. In terms of economy, Roscommon still remains reliant on agriculture, construction, retail and public sector for employment, which can be largely attributed to the rural nature of the county, coupled with few large companies, and limited development in the areas of ICT and in the scientific, medical and technology areas. There are substantially more people working in the public sectors in Roscommon (including public administration, education and

health) than the national average. The chart below shows the breakdown by work sector.



Source: CSO population statistics 2018

## Disability

There are 9,313 people in Roscommon with a disability (CSO Census, 2016). County Roscommon has the 6th highest Registrations per 1,000 of the general population, by county of residence, on the National Intellectual Disability Database 2016 at 7.4 per 1,000. The Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) is a model of supports designed to ensure that children with disabilities can fully participate in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme, thereby reaping the benefits of quality early years care and education and realising the opportunity to reach their full potential. Children enrolled in the ECCE programme can avail of additional supports under the Access and Inclusion model (AIM). According to Pobal's 2018/2019 Early Year's Sector Profile 59 % of county Roscommon Services were in receipt of AIM support. 22 new children availed of level 7 support in 2020 with a further 9 children getting a second year extension at level 7 support under the AIM model (Pobal, PIP Childcare Portal September 2020). This level 7 funding support allows childcare services to have an additional person or to reduce the staff/child ratio in the ECCE

room. This means more one-to-one support for children with disabilities to enable them to participate in the ECCE programme.

## Current Profile - ELC sector in County Roscommon

Roscommon CCC support **64** ELC/SAC providers/agencies operating within the county. Currently there are **59** Early Learning and Care (ELC) and School Age Childcare (SAC) services in county Roscommon with a registered DCEDIY reference number availing of the national childcare schemes. Of this number **22 services** offer full day care, **12 services** offer part time care, **19 services** offer sessional and **6 SAC** offer after school care. There is also **1** Tusla registered Childminder operating under a DCEDIY number. Roscommon CCC supports a total of 4 ELC/SAC services operating without a DCEDIY number. Within the county there are **2 Brothers of charity services**, **1 special education autism unit** and **1 private School Aged Childcare Service**. These services do not provide the national childcare programmes. Roscommon CCC supports **4 voluntary notified childminders** operating within the County and a further **16 Parent and Toddler groups**.

Types of services	Number of services as of 08/03/2021
Early Learning and Care Services	53
School Age Childcare Services	6
Registered Childminders	1
Total number of DCEDIY ELC/SAC Services	60
Total Number of Services (No DCEDIY Number)	4
Childminders Voluntary Notified to Roscommon CCC	4
Parent & Toddler Groups known to Roscommon CCC	16

Source: Roscommon County Childcare Committee 2021

DED area	ELC services	SAC Services	ELC Services without DCEDIY number	Childminder Tusla registered	Childminders Vol notified	P & T groups	FRC
Athlone	10	1	1			3	
Ballaghaderreen	5		1			2	1
Boyle	6	2	1(SAC)	1		4	1
Castlerea	8					1	1
Roscommon	17	2	1		3	4	1
Strokestown	7	1			1	2	
<b>Total</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>4</b>

Source: Roscommon County Childcare Committee 2021

### Challenges within DED areas in County Roscommon:

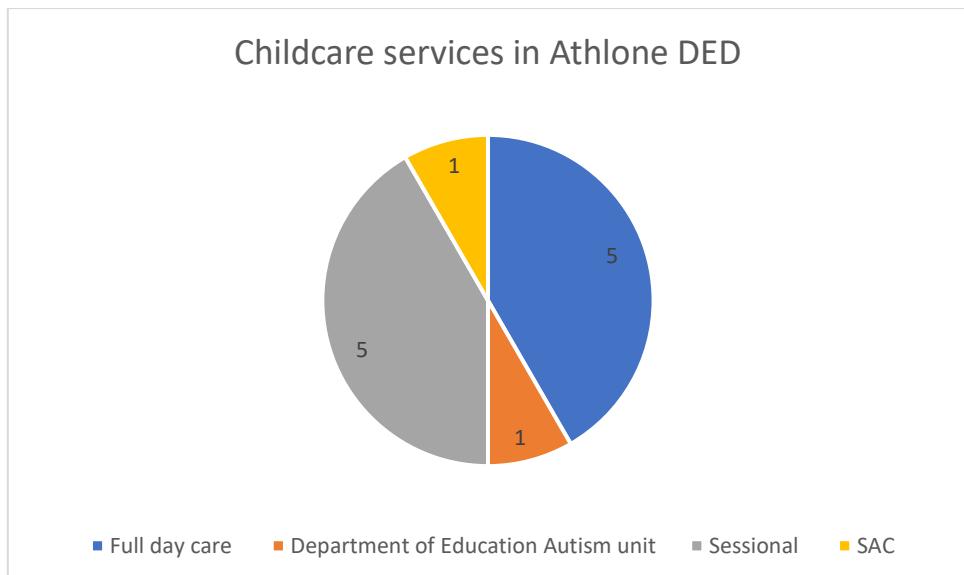
- Poor broadband in the majority of the rural parts of the County may effect NCS applications and ELC/SAC service compliance.
- Public Transport within the County is poor. Local Link does not provide a sufficient service to meet demands of ELC provision.
- The provision of baby spaces is an ongoing challenge in all DED areas in the county.

### Solutions:

- Further support to ELC/SAC services to apply for capital funding to create new childcare places and meet childcare provision required.
- Support to pre-development services to set up
- Support to services by way of training provisions to support quality childcare provision.

- Support to services by way of efficient communication that suits the needs of the services provider. E.G: One to one phone support rather than virtual call as broadband may be poor in some areas of the county.

### **Athlone DED**



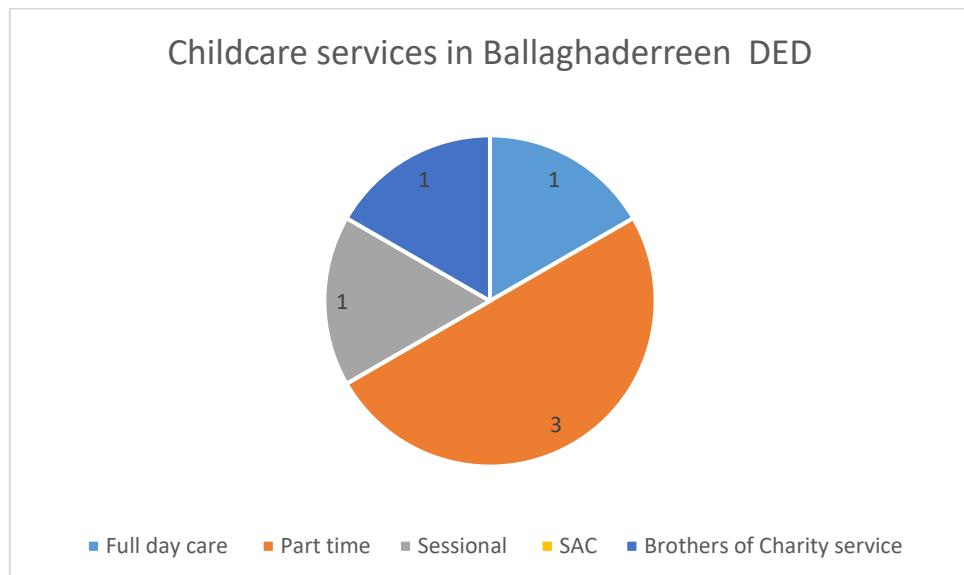
*Source: Roscommon County Childcare Committee 2021*

The Athlone DED area stretches from the town land of Knockcroghery up to the Roscommon –Westmeath Boarder over to the South Roscommon Galway Boarder. This large area has a total population of 19,979 (CSO, 2016). There are 5 full day care ELC/SAC services in this area, 1 standalone SAC services and 5 sessional ELC services. There is also 1 Department of Education funded Autism unit in Athlone town which Roscommon CCC supports.

**Challenges:** Provision of training at suitable times for childcare services. The services in Athlone DED are mainly private providers, one to one would be a preferred training option in this area.

**Solution:** Training offered at evenings and weekends and in service, on a one to one basis to accommodate services.

### Ballaghaderreen DED



*Source: Roscommon County Childcare Committee 2021*

The Ballaghaderreen DED area covers the villages of Frenchpark, Loughglynn, Lisacul and the town of Ballaghaderreen in County Roscommon. The population of Ballaghaderreen town area is 2,651 while smaller villages such as Frenchpark has a population of 898 and Loughglynn, 690. There is 1 Full time, 3 Part time and 1 sessional service in this area providing the National Childcare Programmes. Roscommon CCC also supports 1 Brother of Charity ELC service with training, Child Protection, EDI and NSAI, however this service is not registered for the national childcare schemes. There is an Emergency Reception and Orientation (EROC) centre in Ballaghaderreen town providing part time care for 23 refugee children from 12months to 5 years of age. The community ELC service on the grounds of the Galway Education Training Board (GRETB) closed with the loss of 44 ELC places.

*Roscommon CCC have identified Ballaghaderreen as a gap in childcare/ELC provision.*

An independent report was commissioned on behalf of a local management committee comprising of Roscommon County Childcare Committee, Roscommon LEADER Partnership Company CLG and TUSLA and undertaken by Meehan & Tully regarding the future provision of an early year's service, specifically focusing on the needs of refugees within the community and those accommodated by the Emergency Reception and Orientation Centre (EROC).

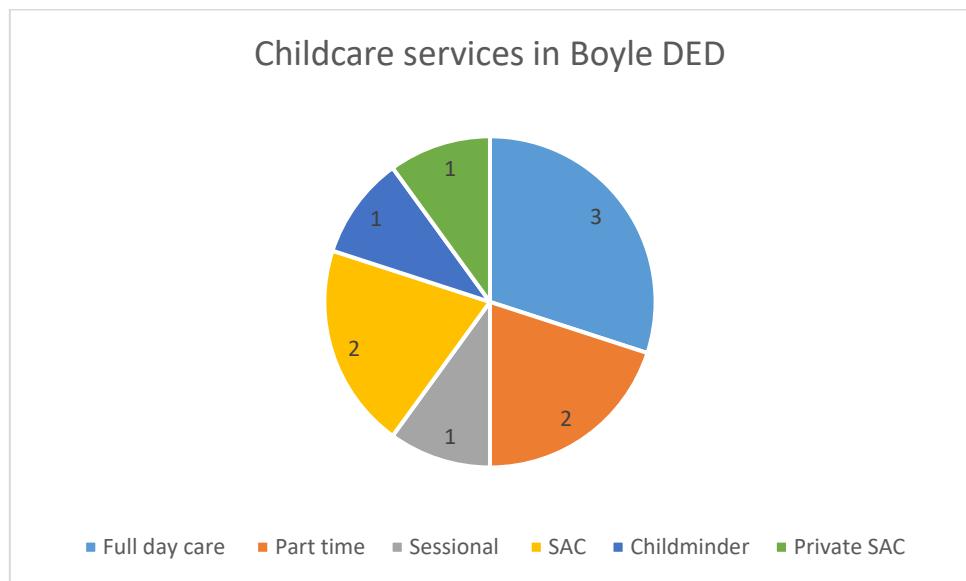
The aim of the report was to provide the local interagency management committee with information regarding the potential need and demand for an early year's and family support service in Ballaghaderreen, Co. Roscommon. The report indicated the current level of early years' service provision within Ballaghaderreen, and whether such a level of provision is adequate for the needs of a town, and catchment area, of the size of Ballaghaderreen, having consideration for the specific needs of the local community, and based upon the demographics of the population and the potential client base.

This has created a gap in capacity for ELC places, however Roscommon CCC are working closely with GRETB and board member organisations in finding solutions which would see this service reopen under a new lease agreement.

**Challenges:** There is a shortage of full day care and baby places in this area. There are only 3 baby spaces available in this DED area. Lack of ELC and SAC places in the town of Ballaghaderreen. A number of families that wish to avail of ELC/SAC have no transport therefore the lack of public transport is also a challenge.

**Solution:** Reopening of the community service in Ballaghaderreen, implementation of phase 2 of the interagency plan to refurbish an existing childcare building in Ballaghaderreen providing ELC places for residents of EROC and wider community. Specific focus for Capital funding for under 1 provision and transport in this area.

## Boyle DED



*Source: Roscommon County Childcare Committee 2021*

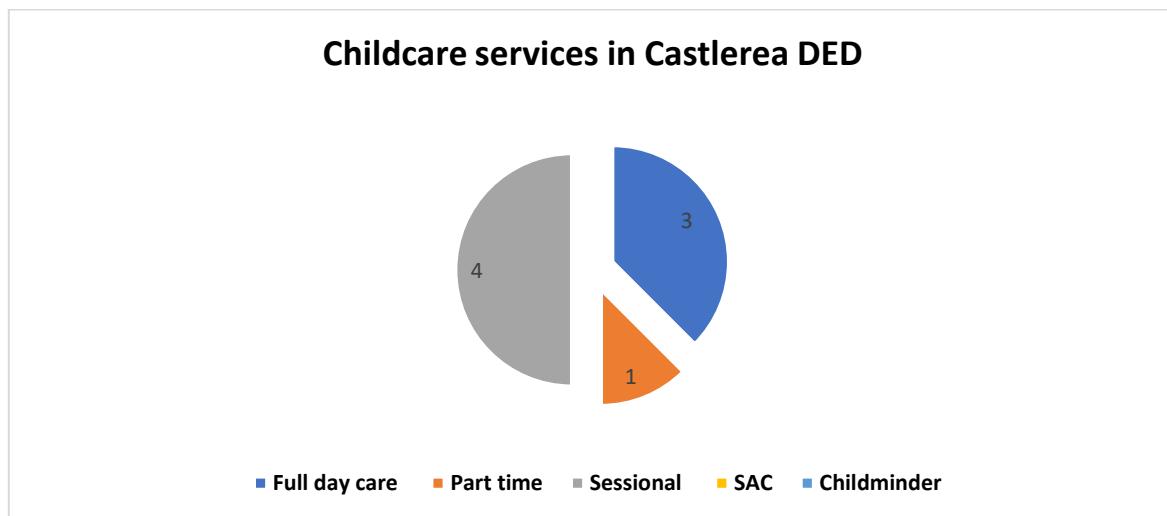
The Boyle area covers the North of the County and meets the Sligo County and Leitrim County boarders. There is quite a distance between services in this area, as, the town of Boyle and County Roscommon side of Carrick on Shannon make up this DED area. A large proportion of population is attached to the town and hinterland of Boyle, as it is over 3,000 (CSO, 2016) while the village of Croghan has a population of 379 (CSO, 2016).

There are 3 Full day care, 2 part time 2 SAC and 1 sessional ELC service. 1 Tusla registered Childminder is also providing a service in this area. Roscommon CCC also supports 1 private SAC within this area. One full day care centre closed their baby room as it was no longer viable under the pod system.

**Challenges:** There is a lack of provision for under 1's in this DED area.

**Solution:** To meet service ELC provision demand, Roscommon CCC plans to specifically focus supports on ELC services within this DED area to provide required childcare provision.

## Castlerea DED



*Source: Roscommon County Childcare Committee 2021*

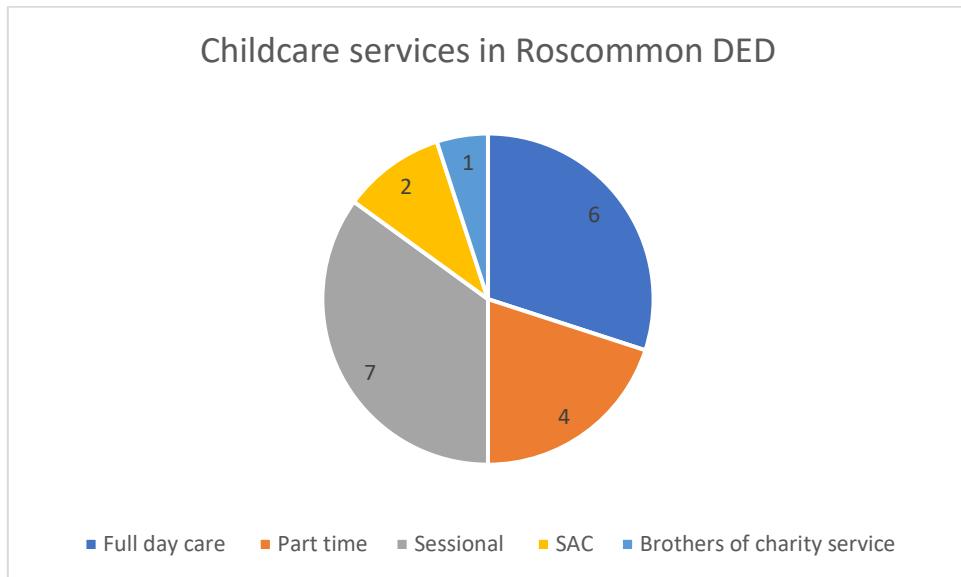
The Castlerea DED area stretches from Oran and Castleplunkett areas to the Galway County and Mayo County Boarders. There are 3 Full day care, 4 sessional and 1 part time service in this area. Castlerea Town with a population of 2,970, has no baby spaces available (CSO, 2016).

While there are 3 full day care services in this DED, 2 of them are a considerable distance from Castlerea town. 1 service is 18km and the 2<sup>nd</sup> service is 23km from the town. The full day care service in the town does not offer baby spaces.

**Challenges:** Provision of Baby spaces within the DED area.

**Solution:** Further support to ELC services to provide required childcare in this DED area and specifically in Castlerea town.

## Roscommon DED



*Source: Roscommon County Childcare Committee 2021*

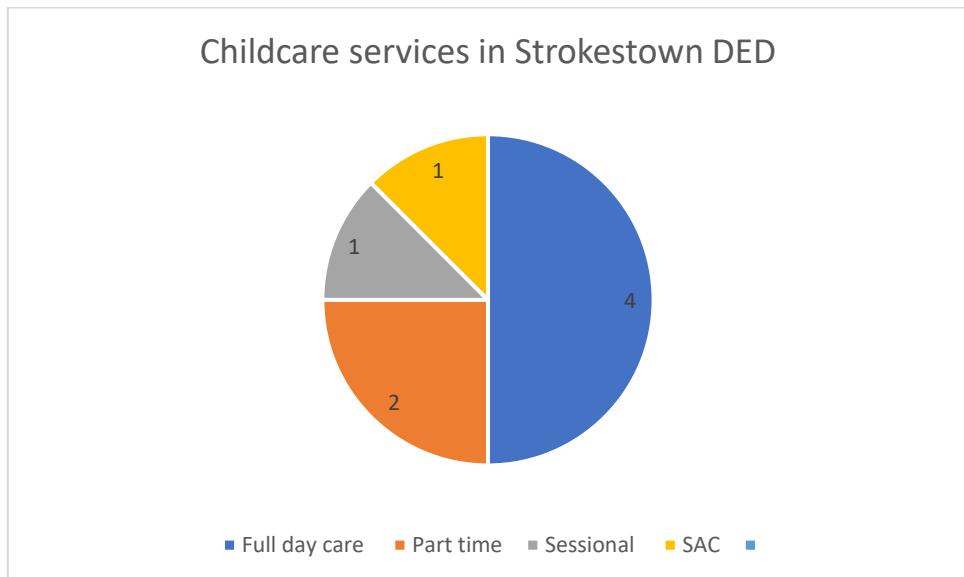
Roscommon Town has a population of 5693 and is the largest town in Roscommon (Roscommon Town Local Area Plan 2014 – 2020). The DED area covers the town itself as other villages such as Athleague which has a population of nearly 1,000 (CSO, 2016). There are 6 full day care services, 4 part time, 7 sessional and 2 SAC services. There is also a Brothers of charity service in Roscommon Town which receives support from Roscommon CCC.

The population of Roscommon town has grown with each census and is expected to continue to grow in the next census. Part time and sessional services are located outside the town which offer ELC/SAC service provision.

**Challenges**-Provision of baby spaces outside of immediate town environs.

**Solution:** Review of childcare service provision outside town environs through needs analysis survey and further support ELC/SAC services to meet childcare provision requirements.

## Strokestown DED



*Source: Roscommon County Childcare Committee 2021*

Strokestown DED has 4 full day care services however these are spread over a significant geographical area, with only 3 baby places available in Strokestown town with a population of 1,049.

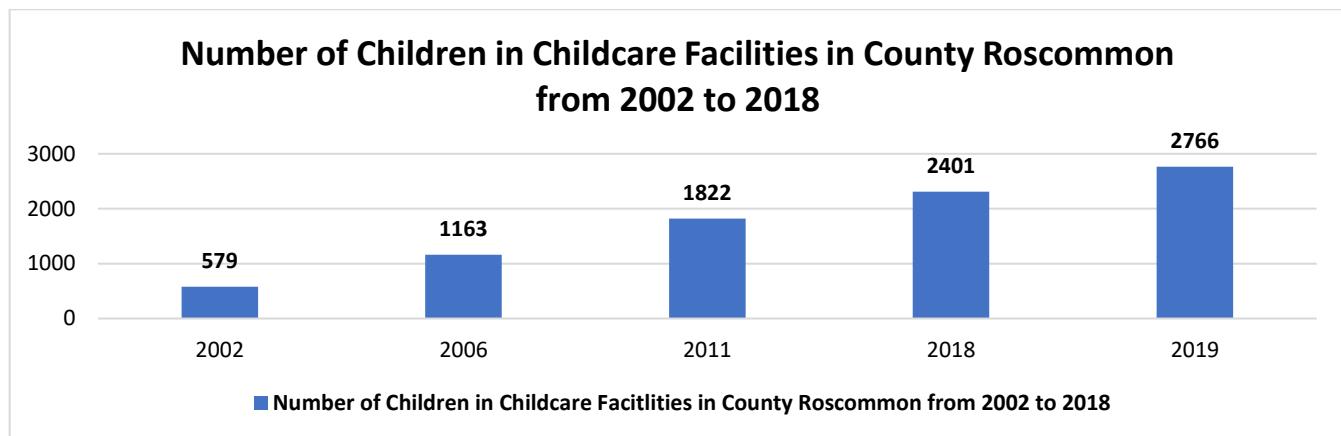
The geographical spread of the other full day care services is Elphin (population of 764), Tarmonbarry (population of 777), and Tulsk (population of 315) (CSO, 2016). The ELC service in Tulsk does not offer baby places.

### **Challenges:** Provision of baby places

**Solution:** Review of childcare service provision outside Strokestown town environs through needs analysis survey and further support ELC/SAC services to meet childcare provision requirements.

## Growth in the Childcare sector

The early year's sector in County Roscommon has grown significantly over the past 16 years with 579 children enrolled in childcare facilities in 2002 compared to 2766 children enrolled in 2019 (Pobal, 2019). The amount of ELC/Sac services in the county has seen a 2% increase from 2017/2018 to 2018/2019 and a further increase of 4 services during the 2020 programme year. Roscommon CCC supported 5 pre-development ELC/SAC services and 1 childminder during 2020.

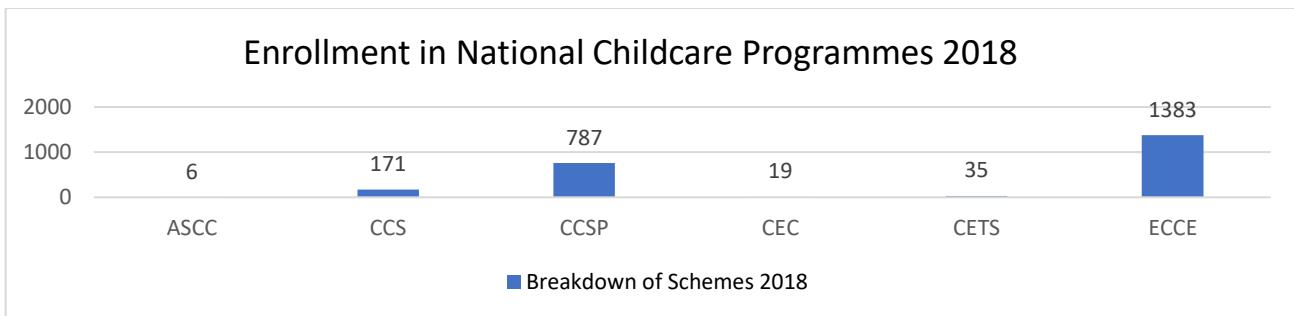


*Source: Roscommon County Childcare – the development of the Early Childhood Care & Education Sector in County Roscommon & Pobal Programme Implementation Portal 2018*

The introduction of the ECCE scheme has demonstrated increased enrolment in early year's education with 1,565 children enrolled in the ECCE scheme in 2018/2019.

In 2018/2019 there were **2766 children** enrolled across the National Childcare Programmes with 77 vacant places (Pobal, 2019). There has been a drop in vacant childcare places in County Roscommon since 206/2017 from 12% to 3% in 2018/2019.

There were 1843 children aged 3 and 4 in Roscommon in 2018. Of this age group there were 1383 currently enrolled in the ECCE scheme during 2018 which is 75% of the age group. This demonstrates the positive engagement families in the County have had with the Early Childhood Care and Education Programme. There were a small number of children in this age group enrolled in CCS/P as this would be more beneficial to parents in receipt of social welfare payments.



Source: Pobal PIP Portal 2018

The National Childcare Scheme was introduced in 2019 and replaced new applications to the legacy schemes (CCS/TEC).

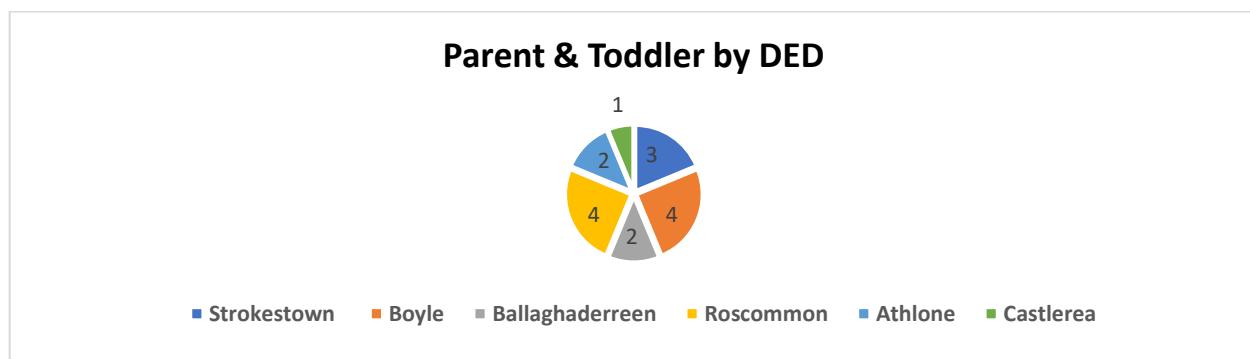
As of 23rd of December 2019 nearly **15,000** applications have been successfully submitted relating to over **20K** children, with over **13,000** awards having already been made to parents. Roscommon CCC continues to support both providers and parents with NCS queries.

***Roscommon CCC are currently awaiting figures from Pobal regarding 2019/20 years in relation to enrolment numbers in the national childcare schemes***

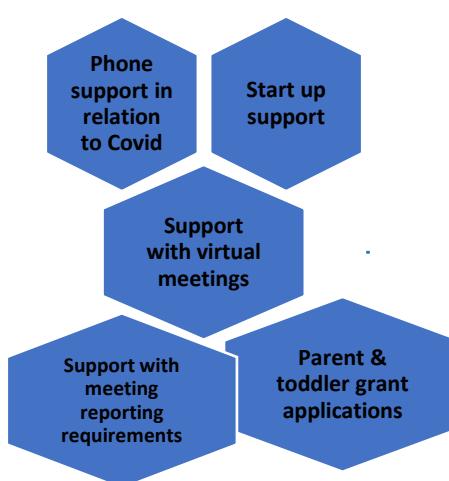
## Current Profile Parent & Toddler Sector - County Roscommon

There are currently **16 parent & toddler** groups operating within the County. Roscommon CCC offer various supports to Parent & Toddler Groups in County Roscommon. Supports include over the phone one to one support and email support. During 2020, Roscommon CCC replaced onsite support with over the phone support to facilitate covid-19 restrictions.

In 2020 **8 P & T** groups applied for the P & T grant initiative and were successful. There was a total of **€4971** granted. 1 new start up group received €1000 and the other 7 groups received in excess of €350 each.



### Sample of supports from Roscommon CCC to Parent & Toddler groups.



## Current Profile Childminding Sector - County Roscommon

Roscommon County Childcare Committee is currently working from the Childminding Action plan as well as SOW 2020 in conjunction with the regional Childminding Development Officer.

There are currently 5 childminders known to Roscommon CCC in county Roscommon. 4 of these are voluntary notified to Roscommon CCC and 1 childminder registered with Tusla.

Roscommon CCC appraised 3 Childminding development grants in 2020 and forwarded these to Meath CCC who were the administrator for the CMDG in 2020. 4 childminders received the reopening support grant. This was completed in conjunction with the regional childminding development officer.

**€4000 reopening support grant was allocated to 4 childminders in County Roscommon in 2020**

**€3000 in Childminding Development grants was allocated to 3 voluntary notified childminders in County Roscommon in 2020**