



7 March 2022

**What you need to know:**

- The Department has streamlined processes to reduce the administrative burden on impacted services during this time.
- Services impacted by flooding can submit temporary relocation applications.
- Services not impacted can apply to temporarily increase their maximum number of children at the service, to support families seeking alternative care due to reducing or temporarily ceasing operations at impacted services.
- Payments will continue to be progressed as scheduled for Start Strong and other funded programs.

Dear services and providers

The impact of the adverse weather conditions continues to be felt across NSW and there are many services now non-operational due to flooding and resulting damage.

We are mindful of the current situation and have streamlined our processes to ease the administrative burden for affected services during this time.

The Department has been reaching out to ECE services across NSW in areas

of flooding in order to understand the scale of damage or impact on their service, so we can help services recover quickly and allow the continuity of early childhood education for children in those areas.

We encourage any services who are unable to lodge notifications due to access to the internet or their devices, to call our Information and Enquiries team on 1800 619 113 to assist you.

If your service is located on a school site, in addition to the below information relating to notifications via NQA ITS, please discuss any impacts on your service with the principal.

## **Disaster assistance, recovery funding and business support**

The NSW Government and Australian Government are working together to provide flood assistance and support.

For information on all available disaster assistance, please call Service NSW on **13 77 88** or visit [nsw.gov.au](https://nsw.gov.au).

Service NSW customer care specialists can help connect flood-affected customers with services and support information.

Over 70 local government areas (LGAs) have been declared disaster areas since November 2021 and are eligible for support.

A full list of disaster declared LGAs can be found at [nsw.gov.au](https://nsw.gov.au).

Businesses impacted by storms and floods from January to March 2022 can request to be notified when financial support is available from the NSW

Government by completing an [online form](#).

For more information and to stay up to date on all available business support, please visit the storms and floods business information hub on the [Service NSW website](#).

## Australian Government update

The Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment has declared several regions of NSW as a Local Area Emergency for the ECE sector. This now includes areas of Western Sydney and Northern NSW.

If your service is located in a region outlined on their [Local Area Emergencies webpage](#), services and families can access more allowable absences and gap free waivers, and there is emergency support available.

You can find important information about this on their [Help in an emergency webpage](#).

## Approvals

If you have been severely impacted by flooding and need to submit an approval for a temporary relocation or an increase in place numbers, our approvals team can walk you through a streamlined approach to ensure it is as easy as possible for you.

Please phone 1800 619 113 and you will be connected to an approvals team member.

## **Relocation approvals**

We understand services may need to temporarily relocate their service because of damage or lack of access to current facilities.

Temporary relocation applications relating to emergencies are considered on a case-by-case basis and will be fast tracked.

Fees for these applications will be waived or refunded if linked to a current emergency.

To apply for temporary relocation, please view the process on our [Get Regulatory Support webpage](#).

If you have families seeking alternative care due to you reducing or temporarily ceasing operations, the department may be able to assist with placements for children.

- Find early childhood education and care services [here](#).
- Contact the department by calling 1800 619 113 or emailing [ececd@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:ececd@det.nsw.edu.au)

## **Approvals for increasing maximum numbers**

In regions affected, services can apply to temporarily increase the maximum number of children who can be educated and cared for by the service at any one time.

Applications to temporarily increase maximum numbers are:

- Fast-tracked – if related to a current emergency.
- Considered on a case-by-case basis.

- Only open to services in clear need, and as long as there's no increased risk to children's safety.

To apply for a temporary increase to maximum numbers:

- Submit an application in NQA ITS (SA03 Application for amendment to service approval)
- We'll waive or refund this fee as long as your application is related to a current emergency.

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## Notification of repairs

If renovations or repairs are required at the premise as a result of floods, a notification of change of information about an approved service (SA12) is required to be submitted via the NQAITS portal.

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## Service closures and notifications

If you can't access the NQAITS portal and you haven't yet notified us that your service is closed, please contact the department by phone 1800 619 113 or email [ececd@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:ececd@det.nsw.edu.au) and our team can assist.

Services are required to notify the department of any closures, incidents, evacuations, or damage to premises. While the regulations require this to be done within 24 hours, services should ensure the safety of children, educators and staff as a first priority.

If you have lost paper or electronic records from your service due to the floods and these are not retrievable, please advise us as part of your notification.

## **Funding arrangements during periods of temporary closure**

Payments will continue to be progressed as scheduled for the following programs:

- Start Strong for community preschools and long day care services
- Start Strong Free Preschool
- Mobile Preschools on contract
- Start Strong Pathways
- Aboriginal Families as Teachers
- Ninganah No More

### **Disability and Inclusion Program HLSN and MCW application cut-off date**

The cut-off date for Quarter 2 2022 High Learning Support Needs (HLSN) and Minor Capital Works (MCW) funding applications has been extended to 5pm Friday 11 March 2022.

Please contact the Information and Enquiries team on 1800 619 113 or email [ecec.funding@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:ecec.funding@det.nsw.edu.au) if you need a further extension due to flood.

### **Australian Government funded services**

Australian Government funded services, including those who receive Child Care Subsidy (CCS) should contact the [Australian Government](#) for further advice and information.

## **Stay informed**

- [SES](#) - publishes current warnings and provides information and advice about staying safe in a flood.
- [Bureau of Meteorology website](#) - for up-to-date information about the weather in your area.
- [Flood warning system](#) - the Bureau has set up a flood watch for your local area.

## More information

- [Visit our website](#) to assist you to find regulatory support, respond and recover from emergencies at your service.
- For advice and help, please contact us by calling 1800 619 113 and emailing [ececd@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:ececd@det.nsw.edu.au).



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Sent to all services and providers in NSW

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