

# **Implementing Early Learning and Childcare under the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014: Progress Update**



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## **Overview**

The Scottish Government is committed to expanding and delivering high quality, flexible early learning and childcare (ELC) which is affordable and accessible for all. We know that this can impact on poverty and inequality by improving outcomes for all children, especially eligible 2 year olds; and, supporting parents to work, train or study.

The ELC provisions under the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 (the Act) commenced in August 2014. Two years on, this report outlines progress and delivery throughout Scotland.

The purpose of the ELC provisions in the Act is to deliver the first stage of increasing the hours and flexibility of the ELC (funded) entitlement; expanding this to over a quarter of 2 year olds; and, setting the stage for further expansion and improvement.

In Scotland, 3 and 4 year old children are eligible for 600 hours funded early learning and childcare per year. Around 27% of 2 year olds are also eligible to benefit from early learning and childcare. Local authorities are responsible for delivering this entitlement through their own provision, or, through partner providers in the private or third sector. ELC can be provided through a range of settings including nurseries, playgroups, childminders and family centres.

The entitlement includes a requirement on local authorities to ensure that the method by which it makes early learning and childcare available is flexible enough to allow parents an appropriate degree of choice when deciding how to access the service. The purpose is to provide a range of options so that the hours can be used in different patterns and integrated with additional (unfunded) hours, while maintaining high quality provision for young children.

This entitlement expanded upon the previous system of 475 hours pre-school education per year.

This report provides a comprehensive picture of delivery based on information to date. It summarises current progress, and addresses the following specific issues:

1. Infrastructure changes
2. Parental perceptions of the service
3. Uptake of free entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds
4. Uptake of free entitlement for 2 year olds
5. Local authorities consultations with local populations
6. Increased flexibility and choice
7. Staffing changes

## **Data and Information**

This report is informed by a range of sources of data and information, including annual statistics published by the Scottish Government (SG), Care Inspectorate (CI), and the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC). Further information derives from a national parent survey; the Growing Up in Scotland (GUS) longitudinal study; and, an interim survey of local authorities.

Progress was reported by all local authorities through an interim survey between January and August 2016. Information from the survey included in this report is based on 31 responses representing all local authorities, as Stirling and Clackmannanshire Councils have shared services for education and social services and responded collectively.

Going forward, we are developing a monitoring and evaluation framework to assess progress on our main aims, including improving children's outcomes (child attainment and reducing inequalities), and improving outcomes for parents (parent's participating in employment, education or training; and, improved parenting capacity, and parental health and wellbeing).

## Summary

**The majority of local authorities (87%) have built, extended, adjusted or integrated services; 61% are also planning further build or change.<sup>1</sup>**

- 22 new nurseries have been built, with a further 30 planned
- 78 have been extended, with a further 41 planned
- 178 have been adjusted, with a further 87 planned

**95% of providers of all early learning and childcare (funded and unfunded) are graded good, very good, or excellent against care standards**

- 95% of all *day care services for children* were graded good, very good, or excellent in the categories of quality of care, environment and staff in 2014<sup>2</sup>

**Satisfaction with funded ELC was very high in the first 6 months after expansion to 600 hours, with 72% of parents very satisfied and 25% satisfied with the overall standard of provision that their child was receiving<sup>3</sup>**

- In the six months before and after the expansion to 600 hours, there was a statistically significant decline in the proportion of parents or carers who expressed a desire for a change in the days on/times at which they could use their hours (from 26% to 18%)

**96,000 children were registered for their entitlement to ELC at September 2015, including 97% of eligible 3 and 4 year olds<sup>4</sup>.**

**4,321 2 year old children (7.3% of whole 2 year old population) were registered for their entitlement to ELC at September 2015.<sup>5</sup> Across the year, 27% of all 2 year olds are eligible.<sup>6</sup>**

**All local authorities have undertaken consultation with their local populations; and, 90% have consulted since August 2014<sup>7</sup>**

**Over half of those who consulted have published their response**

- 18 local authorities have published the results of their consultations; and, 15 have published a response<sup>8</sup>

**The majority of local authorities have increased flexibility through a wider range of choice and options**

- 81% of local authorities increased flexibility in 2015; and, 71% plan to increase or further increase flexibility<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Interim survey findings of local authority progress, January – August 2016

<sup>2</sup> Care Inspectorate, Early learning and childcare statistics 2014

<sup>3</sup> New analysis from GUS data. Full analysis available at:

<http://growingupinscotland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/Growing-Up-in-Scotland-Uptake-and-views-about-Early-Learning-and-Childcare-at-age-4.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Early Learning and Childcare census, 2015

<sup>5</sup> Ibid

<sup>6</sup> 2 and 3 year old registrations are on a termly basis, and therefore will increase in terms 2 and 3

<sup>7</sup> Interim survey of local authority progress, (January – August 2016)

<sup>8</sup> Ibid

<sup>9</sup> Ibid

**2,500 providers deliver the funded entitlement<sup>10</sup>; excluding childminders**

- 74% of 3 and 4 year olds were registered with local authority provision and 26% with partner providers
- 81% of 2 year olds were estimated to be registered with local authority provision and 19% with partner providers
- 966 partner providers worked with local authorities to deliver the entitlement

**39,450 staff work in the early learning and childcare sector; and an estimated 23,000<sup>11</sup> deliver the funded entitlement for 2, 3 and 4 year olds**

- Around half the workforce work are part-time
- Just under 6,000 workers have started active employment within a service providing the funded entitlement within the last two years

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<sup>10</sup> This paragraph draws on data from the Early Learning and Childcare census, 2015

<sup>11</sup> This paragraph draws on information from Scottish Social Services Council workforce data, 2015

## **Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014: Background on early learning and childcare provisions**

The purpose of parts 6, 7 and 8 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 (the Act) is to improve and integrate the role of early years support in children's and families' lives by increasing the amount and flexibility of early learning and childcare, and to future proof the policy for further extension, expansion and integration of early learning and childcare (funded and non-funded hours) with school and out of school care.

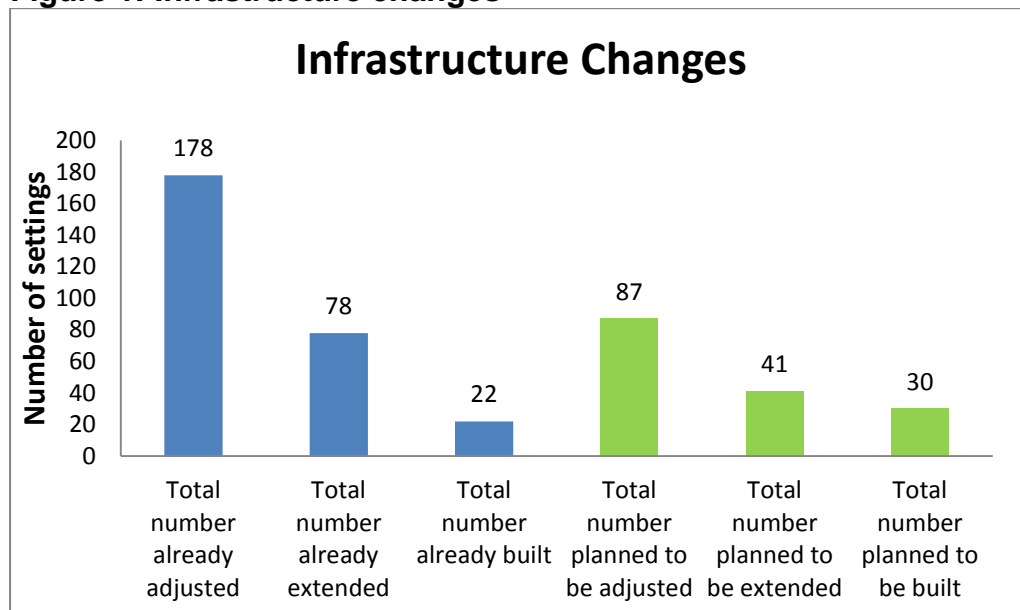
### **The Act:**

- **Introduced a new concept of *early learning and childcare* (ELC)** to remove an artificial divide between *childcare* for 0 - 3 year olds, followed by *pre-school education* sessions for 3 and 4 year olds; or, *pre-school* for 3 and 4 year olds, topped up by *wrap around childcare*. It reflects EU and OECD recommended models of integrated education and care and sets the foundation for high quality ELC based on play and nurture regardless of the setting, provider or time spent.
- **Increased the funded entitlement to 600 hours** a year (around 16 hours a week) from 475 hours a year (12.5 hours a week over 38 weeks).
- Required education authorities to offer **more flexibility and choice over how those hours are accessed by parents**, informed by local consultations every 2 years with published responses. This means moving away from a default model of 5 x 2.5 hour am or pm sessions a week; to, other options that meet a range of parental needs, e.g. 5 x 3 hour 10 minute sessions, 4 x 4 hour sessions, or 2 x 8 hour sessions, with options to integrate additional unfunded hours to improve consistency for the child. This is within a **minimum framework** of 2.5 hours a day to a maximum of 8 hours a day, not necessarily confined to term time.
- **Extended this entitlement to around 27% of 2 year olds** who are set to benefit most, including those with parents in receipt of out of work benefits; low income (as defined by free school lunch criteria); and, those 2 year olds who are looked after, or subject to a kinship care or guardianship order. This included **alternative arrangements** for looked after 2 year olds where this would better meet their needs.
- The Act also introduced a **requirement on education authorities to consult on *if and how they could best deliver or support additional unfunded hours of early learning and childcare; and, out of school care for school aged children***. The purpose of this is to create an opportunity to co-ordinate consultation and planning of all funded early learning and childcare, day care and out of school care along-side unfunded provision which local authorities have powers to deliver or support.

## Infrastructure changes<sup>12</sup>

In order to accommodate longer days, more children and greater flexibility, local authorities have been investing in their infrastructure. 87% of local authorities have already built, extended, adjusted or integrated services to accommodate this. 61% are planning to extend, adjust or build new nurseries to further increase options for flexibility. We are also aware that some local authorities began rebuilding their nursery estate prior to the introduction of the Act, these are not reflected in the survey results. For example, South Lanarkshire have rebuilt their full early years estate with the exception of one nursery.

**Figure 1: Infrastructure changes**



<sup>12</sup> interim survey of local authority progress, (January – August 2016)

## Parental perceptions of the service

Recent analysis of Growing Up in Scotland (GUS)<sup>13</sup> data helps to provide a measure of satisfaction with funded ELC provision, around the time that the entitlement was extended to 600 hours. Data was collected from main carers of Birth Cohort Two between February 2014 and February 2015 in a self-completion questionnaire that was sent out to coincide with the cohort child's fourth birthday. Main carers were asked a range of questions about their use and experience of funded ELC, as well as any other unfunded ELC provision that they used at the time. Findings from this data are presented here for the first time.

Over 3,000 parents responded to the questionnaire. Response rates were lower from main carers who were living in more deprived SIMD areas and were in lower income groups. To adjust for this, non-responses weights were applied to the data to ensure findings were representative of the socio-economic profile of the full GUS cohort.

Almost all (98%) main carers were making use of their funded ELC entitlement, and almost all of those who responded to the question 'How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the overall standard of pre-school provision by your provider?' stated that they were either satisfied or very satisfied: 72% were very satisfied; 25% were satisfied; 2% were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied; and 1% were either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

Funded ELC provision was extended from 475 to 600 hours part-way through the data collection period (in August 2014). This did not result in any change in overall satisfaction in the 6 months following the expansion. The proportion of main carers who expressed each level of satisfaction remained static before and after the expansion.

To measure parental perceptions of flexibility in funded ELC provision, GUS asked main carers if they would like to make any changes to the number of hours and days their child received his/her funded pre-school provision. Overall 23% of main carers who were using their ELC entitlement said that they would like to make a change to this. After the entitlement increased there was a statistically significant decline in the proportion of main carers who expressed a desire for change: 26% had expressed an interest in change to hours/days when the entitlement was 475 hours but this dropped to 18% after the entitlement increase to 600 hours.

Of those who expressed an interest in change after the increase in statutory entitlement: 87% expressed an interest in longer sessions of 3 hours or more; 46% in drop off before 8.30am on weekdays; 22% in pick up after 6pm on weekdays; 10% in sessions on Saturdays; and 7% in sessions on Sundays<sup>14</sup>. The table below shows the proportion of all parents who expressed a desire for change before and after the increase in statutory entitlement (figures are expressed here as a proportion of all parents who responded to the GUS survey, rather than as a proportion of those who expressed a desire for change).

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<sup>13</sup> New analysis from GUS data. Full analysis available at: <http://growingupinScotland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/Growing-Up-in-Scotland-Uptake-and-views-about-Early-Learning-and-Childcare-at-age-4.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> Percentages do not total 100 because respondents were able to express a desire for more than one type of change.



**Table 1: Proportion of main carers who expressed an interest in various changes to hours/days of funded ELC (as a proportion of all of those who responded to the survey)**

	<b>Before increase to 600 hours</b>	<b>After increase to 600 hours</b>
<b>Longer sessions of 3 hours or more</b>	24% (n= 412)	15% (n=207)
<b>Drop off before 8.30am on weekdays</b>	11% (n=186)	8% (n=109)
<b>Pick up after 6pm on weekdays</b>	4% (n=69)	4% (n=53)
<b>Sessions on Saturdays</b>	2% (n=41)	2% (n=25)
<b>Sessions on Sundays</b>	2% n=27)	1% (n=16)

An exploratory analysis of parents' views on the proposed increase to 1140 hours per year for 3 and 4 year olds undertaken by SG Education Analytical Services (EAS) in 2015<sup>15</sup> found that lack of availability of places, lack of flexibility and limited choice in the type of ELC available to parents (regardless of their location-urban/rural) were the most commonly reported barriers to using the current childcare entitlement. This was especially true for those living in large urban areas.

Further work in focus groups also found that for some, especially parents in lower socio economic groups, were unlikely to take up the expansion of funded ELC provision because they didn't see the value to them or their child. For the extended ELC entitlement, parents' preference was for year round ELC, rather school term time only. This was echoed in the follow up focus groups<sup>16</sup>, where parents reported that ELC provision covering school holidays, full days at nursery and/or additional hours was a key requirement, and for some parents a prerequisite, to take up funded ELC provision.

<sup>15</sup> SG Education Analytical Services (2015) "Increasing the hours of free early learning and child care provision. An exploratory analysis of parents' views on the proposed increase to 1140 hours per year." Available from: <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0049/00491650.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> SG Education Analytical Services (2015) "Increasing the hours of free early learning and child care provision. Qualitative Findings." Available from: <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0049/00491651.pdf>

## Uptake of free entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds

The figure of 97% registration for 3 and 4 year olds has been generally consistent over a number of years; and, closely matches findings from the Growing Up in Scotland study (GUS) that shows 98% of parents of 4 year olds were making use of their funded entitlement<sup>17</sup>.

**Table 2: Registrations<sup>(1)</sup> for early learning and childcare at local authority and partnership centres, September 2015**

	Under 2	2 year olds	3 + 4 year olds <sup>(2)</sup>		Deferred Entry <sup>(4)</sup>	Total
			Number	% of eligible <sup>(3)</sup>		
Aberdeen City	36	36	3,284	90.0	163	3,519
Aberdeenshire	3	69	4,538	93.2	304	4,914
Angus	-	84	1,667	92.3	125	1,876
Argyll & Bute	-	49	1,285	103.1	65	1,399
Clackmannanshire	-	42	880	102.9	19	941
Dumfries & Galloway	-	84	2,234	97.7	131	2,449
Dundee City	15	217	2,468	100.3	144	2,844
East Ayrshire	54	124	2,071	100.9	47	2,296
East Dunbartonshire	-	59	1,644	94.1	90	1,793
East Lothian	15	53	1,802	95.2	122	1,992
East Renfrewshire	22	62	1,596	91.8	62	1,742
Edinburgh City	246	383	7,830	94.8	485	8,944
Eilean Siar	1	15	402	106.2	25	443
Falkirk	-	109	2,768	100.3	110	2,987
Fife	7	456	6,321	98.5	227	7,011
Glasgow City	43	393	9,206	88.7	404	10,046
Highland	2	49	3,900	105.3	316	4,267
Inverclyde	81	152	1,098	88.4	60	1,391
Midlothian	74	65	1,678	103.5	96	1,913
Moray	-	31	1,529	99.8	111	1,671
North Ayrshire	37	218	2,244	100.3	50	2,549
North Lanarkshire	162	315	5,881	97.2	160	6,518
Orkney Islands	-	16	320	96.2	50	386
Perth & Kinross	-	108	2,168	95.1	208	2,484
Renfrewshire	142	361	2,858	98.7	167	3,528
Scottish Borders	-	84	1,773	101.6	81	1,938
Shetland Islands	-	-	427	101.2	44	471
South Ayrshire	21	65	1,693	97.5	97	1,876
South Lanarkshire	177	363	5,398	101.4	204	6,142
Stirling	46	82	1,535	113.5	52	1,715
West Dunbartonshire	39	134	1,619	102.5	64	1,856
West Lothian	-	43	3,143	91.5	175	3,361
<b>Scotland<sup>(5)</sup></b>	<b>1,223</b>	<b>4,321</b>	<b>87,260</b>	<b>96.6</b>	<b>4,458</b>	<b>97,262</b>

(1) This is a snapshot of registrations at census week (14-18 September 2015). It does not include children who were registered after this.

<sup>17</sup> New analysis from GUS data. Full analysis available at: <http://growingupinscotland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/Growing-Up-in-Scotland-Uptake-and-views-about-Early-Learning-and-Childcare-at-age-4.pdf>

- (2) Refers to academic year - 3 and 4 year olds were previously referred to as 'ante pre-school' and 'pre-school' respectively.
- (3) Eligible children are estimated from population projections. For 3 year olds, eligibility is assumed as at the term after the child's 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday.
- (4) Children who are eligible to attend primary school but have deferred entry and remain in ELC
- (5) Includes data from 2014 where centres did not respond.
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Percentage uptake may be in excess of 100% for a few reasons:

- If more children attend funded ELC provision in a local authority than are resident in that local authority (as percentage uptake is calculated using resident population);<sup>18</sup>
- if children receive ELC prior to their funded entitlement, on a discretionary basis as decided by the local authority (uptake for 3 year olds is calculated based on half of all 3 year olds being eligible as at September); or
- if a child is registered for funded ELC at more than one setting they will be included in the figures multiple times, although this has been estimated at only 2% nationally.

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<sup>18</sup> Resident population figures are based on population figures for Council areas produced by National Records of Scotland.

## Uptake of free entitlement for 2 year olds

The entitlement to funded ELC was extended to 15% of 2 year olds across the year from August 2014; rising to 27% across the year from August 2015. Table 3 shows the number of registrations in September 2015.

**Table 3: Local authority and partnership early learning and childcare registrations of 2 year olds by local authority, 2015<sup>(1)(2)</sup>**

	2 year olds				All 2 year olds	Percentage of all 2 year olds
	Looked after	Kinship Care or have a guardian	Parent on qualifying benefits	In Need, vulnerable or under local priorities		
Aberdeen City	-	1	10	-	36	1.4
Aberdeenshire	9	5	33	22	69	2.3
Angus	2	4	71	7	84	7.1
Argyll & Bute	6	-	42	1	49	5.9
Clackmannanshire	2	1	38	1	42	6.9
Dumfries & Galloway	7	2	75	-	84	6.1
Dundee City	11	6	199	1	217	12.5
East Ayrshire	1	6	34	80	124	8.8
East Dunbartonshire	3	-	41	15	59	5.9
East Lothian	2	1	42	8	53	4.5
East Renfrewshire	3	4	11	27	62	5.9
Edinburgh City	39	18	178	117	383	7.1
Eilean Siar	-	-	11	4	15	5.9
Falkirk	3	2	101	1	109	5.9
Fife	18	15	281	141	456	11.1
Glasgow City	10	16	239	126	393	5.4
Highland	3	3	41	1	49	2.0
Inverclyde	10	6	78	50	152	19.5
Midlothian	2	1	25	-	65	5.9
Moray	2	-	26	3	31	3.2
North Ayrshire	19	10	151	37	218	15.1
North Lanarkshire	20	12	119	158	315	8.1
Orkney Islands	1	-	12	3	16	7.6
Perth & Kinross	6	1	80	21	108	7.5
Renfrewshire	23	6	175	73	361	18.9
Scottish Borders	2	3	73	1	84	7.1
Shetland Islands	-	-	-	-	-	0.0
South Ayrshire	12	3	27	23	65	6.2
South Lanarkshire	6	12	240	72	363	10.5
Stirling	7	2	56	17	82	9.2
West Dunbartonshire	2	6	79	47	134	12.9
West Lothian	1	1	40	1	43	2.0
<b>Scotland<sup>(3)</sup></b>	<b>232</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>2,628</b>	<b>1,058</b>	<b>4,321</b>	<b>7.3</b>

(1) Based on children in the 2,492 centres identified by local authorities who provided early learning and childcare and where the centre type was local authority or partnership. Children are counted once for each centre they are registered with, so the same child may be counted multiple times if they attend more than one centre. Children may also attend centres outside of the local authority they live in, which would also affect these figures. Local authority percentage estimates are based on the local authority in which each centre is located, and estimates of the number of children in each local authority eligible for early learning and childcare.

(2) Due to a small number of 2 year olds being included in more than one sub-category, the sum of the sub-categories may exceed the total number of 2 year olds.

(3) Includes data from 2014 where centres did not respond.

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The Scottish Government is keen to identify the data and practice issues behind lower than expected uptake levels for 2 year olds. We are investigating data collation issues; and, we have commissioned Ipsos Mori to research the drivers and barriers to uptake, with a report due in November 2016. We are also investigating how wider support services for more vulnerable children and parents can be delivered within the context of the early learning and childcare entitlement.

### **Proportion of young children registered for funded ELC with local authorities and partner providers**

Table 4 shows the split of children registered at local authority providers and partner providers. This does not include those 1 year olds who may be in funded ELC under local discretion or priorities.

Between 2013 and 2015, funded ELC has been provided by approximately 2,500 settings – around 60% of which are local authority, and the remaining 40% partner providers. In 2015, although 61% of the settings were local authority providers, 74% of ELC child registrations were within these settings (comparable with previous years).

The split between children being registered at local authority or partnership providers differs across local authorities, ranging in 2015 from 94% children registered at a local authority centre in Falkirk Council, to 41% children registered at a local authority centre in Moray Council.

**Table 4: Split of children registered at local authority providers and partner providers (excluding under 2 year olds) <sup>(1)</sup>**

	Percentage of children registered - 2015	
	Local authority	Partnership
Aberdeen City	65%	35%
Aberdeenshire	70%	30%
Angus	70%	30%
Argyll & Bute	56%	44%
Clackmannanshire	87%	13%
Dumfries & Galloway	61%	39%
Dundee City	78%	22%
East Ayrshire	88%	12%
East Dunbartonshire	60%	40%
East Lothian	80%	20%
East Renfrewshire	89%	11%
City of Edinburgh	58%	42%
Eilean Siar	84%	16%
Falkirk	94%	6%
Fife	87%	13%
Glasgow City	76%	24%
Highland	68%	32%
Inverclyde	90%	10%
Midlothian	82%	18%
Moray	41%	59%
North Ayrshire	76%	24%
North Lanarkshire	82%	18%
Orkney Islands	90%	10%
Perth & Kinross	75%	25%
Renfrewshire	61%	39%
Scottish Borders	70%	30%
Shetland Islands	83%	17%
South Ayrshire	82%	18%
South Lanarkshire	70%	30%
Stirling	76%	24%
West Dunbartonshire	78%	22%
West Lothian	92%	8%
<b>SCOTLAND</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>26%</b>

(1) Analysis of ELC census, 2015

## **Data collection**

Work is underway to improve the accuracy of the data in the immediate term; and, to transform data collection more significantly to reflect policy changes and user needs over the next few years.

A national consultation on the collection of all ELC data by the Scottish Government and other organisations found that there is a need for more detailed information to be collected about individual children rather than registrations, or centre level data.

There was also a strong preference for gathering data at term 3 to obtain a full picture of all children eligible for ELC across the year.

Further details are published in the Early Learning and Childcare Data Consultation Findings<sup>19</sup>.

A series of recommendations for ELC data collections are now being developed, from which the Scottish Government, in conjunction with the ELC Strategic Evidence Group and the data advisory sub group, will draft a data transformation action plan for taking forward the necessary changes. Recommendations will be made by Autumn 2016.

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<sup>19</sup> <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Children/scotstat/ELCConsult2015/ELCconsfind>

## **Local authority consultations with local populations<sup>20</sup>**

Under section 50(1)(a) of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 (the Act) education authorities must consult at least once every 2 years, with such persons as appear to them to be representative of parents of children under school age in their area about how they should make ELC available. Under section 50(1)(b) of the Act they must have regard to the views expressed in the consultations and prepare and publish plans on how they intend to make ELC available in response to those views.

Under section 54 of the Act, education authorities must consult at least once every 2 years on whether and if they should provide early learning and childcare which they have discretion to provide over and above the funded hours. They can also charge for those hours in order to better integrate with the funded hours.

Under section 55 of the Act, local authorities must consult at least once every 2 years on how they should provide funded day care and out of school care for children in need; and, whether and how they should provide unfunded day care and out of school care for children not in need.

90% of local authorities have consulted with parents on patterns of ELC provision since the commencement of the Act in August 2014. Local authorities also consulted in advance of commencement, including the remaining 10%, in anticipation of changes in the Act which were commenced very soon after it was passed by Parliament in February 2014.

A variety of consultation methods were used including paper / online surveys to all or some parents and focus groups. The surveys and focus groups used a mix of open and closed questions and most allowed parents to freely express their views on patterns of ELC. Most respondents did not target a particular group of parents for their consultation. Those who did so mainly targeted parents from a particular local area, or from a certain background and these consultations were mainly focus groups. The purpose of regular statutory consultation is to establish on-going dialogue with local communities; and, as such some local authorities consult through individual nurseries or on a continuing basis.

25 local authorities identified changes required to their current pattern of ELC delivery following consultation.

Of those who have consulted, 18 have published the results from the consultation, and 15 have published their local authority's response. It is not always easy to find published results of consultations where the authority have reported that they have done so as they are often within committee meeting minutes or embedded within other documents.

16 local authorities (52%) have also consulted on additional unfunded ELC which local authorities have the powers to provide at their own discretion. 14 local authorities (45%) have consulted on out of school care which they can fund or support.

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<sup>20</sup> This section draws throughout on an interim survey of local authority progress, (January – August 2016), unless otherwise stated.



The Care Inspectorate's February 2016 review of the implementation of 600 hours reports that:<sup>21</sup>

*“The clear progress being made by local authorities to measure and meet parental demand for early learning and childcare is welcome, and there is a need to embed effective and widespread methods for consulting with parents.”*

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<sup>21</sup> Scotland's early learning and childcare – an initial overview of the expansion of provision during 2014 / 15, Implementing Parts 6,7 and 8 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act (2014, Care Inspectorate, February 2016

## Increased flexibility and choice<sup>22</sup>

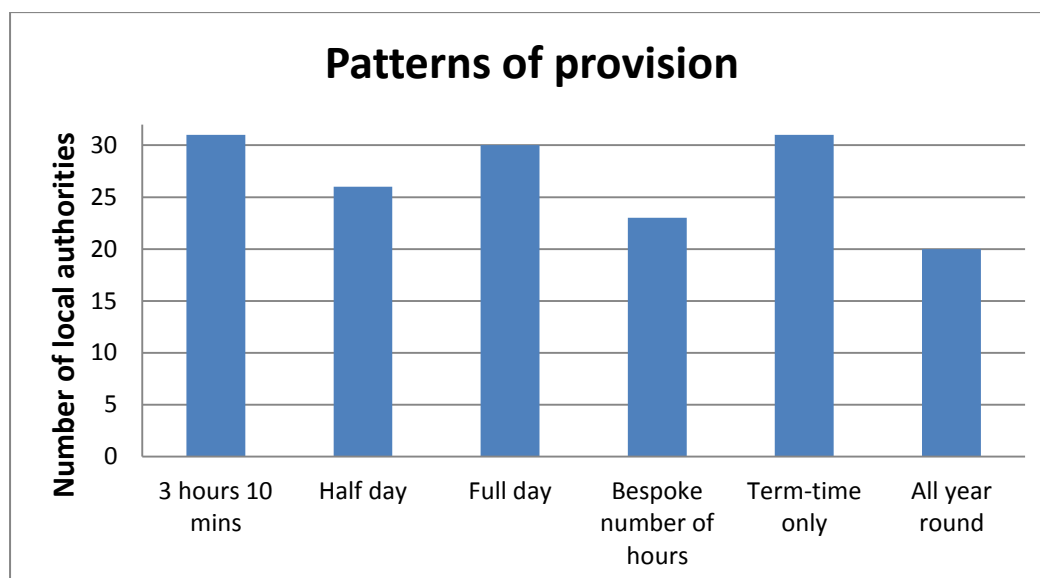
Under section 53 of the Act, education authorities must ensure ELC provision is flexible enough to allow parents an appropriate degree of choice and flexibility when deciding how to access the service.

Over the past 12 months, 81% of local authorities have improved flexibility by increasing the number of options available to parents to take up ELC; and, 71% plan to do so within the next year.

Local authorities currently working towards increasing flexibility are introducing a range of options including:

- 3 hours 10 mins sessions
- ½ day (4 hours) and full day (8 hours) provision, with additional hours for purchase
- Extended sessions with additional hours for purchase (e.g. 6 hours until 16:00 + 2 hours to 18:00)
- Alignment with school days (6 hours)
- Year round provision
- Extended access to funded places in partner provider settings
- Increased use of childminders
- Additional rural settings
- Split placements across various settings

**Figure 2: Pattern of Provision of Funded hours, across all local authorities**



<sup>22</sup> This section draws throughout on the findings of the interim survey of local authority progress, (January – August 2016), unless otherwise stated.

The Care Inspectorate's February 2016 review of the implementation of 600 hours reports that:<sup>23</sup>

*“The choice of provision available to parents varies depending on local authority, and location within each local authority, and in some cases would benefit from further flexibility. Some local authorities are providing additional flexibility around both the timing of sessions and their own commissioning policies, which is bringing more private nurseries, playgroups and childminders into early learning and childcare partnerships, and thereby enhancing flexibility and choice further.*

*Where local authorities have been able to align the opening times of their own nursery and primary school provision, this has resulted in parental convenience and support effective take-up of hours offered”.*

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<sup>23</sup> Scotland's early learning and childcare – an initial overview of the expansion of provision during 2014 / 15, Implementing Parts 6,7 and 8 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act (2014, Care Inspectorate, February 2016

## **Cross Boundary Approach and Issues** <sup>24</sup>

Under the Act, local authorities are required to secure an ELC place for each eligible child within their area. They can do this using their own provisions; and, other partner providers from private, child-minding and third sector. They can also secure cross boundary provision in agreement with other local authorities.

Cross boundary arrangements are not a duty under the Act. The statutory guidance on ELC<sup>25</sup> recommends that cross boundary no-charging policies are implemented uniformly; however, the guidance also indicates that this only works where there is a balance of children in and out of local authority areas. Where there is a different ratio of children moving out and into local authority areas, there needs to be reciprocal arrangements with clear agreement on funding and admission policies.

85% of applicable local authorities have a cross boundary agreement in place with neighbouring authorities (Highland and 3 island authority areas are not applicable); with 33% having parental guidance in place to support parents who wish to place their child in ELC out with their home authority. A number of the authorities which do not currently have guidance are developing this.

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<sup>24</sup> This section draws throughout on an interim survey of local authority progress, (January – August 2016), unless otherwise stated.

<sup>25</sup> Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, Early Learning and Childcare, Statutory Guidance, 2014

## Staffing changes

SSSC data indicate that in 2015 the total workforce in the early learning and childcare sector comprised 33,460 early learning and childcare staff; 5,570 childminders; and 1,600 teachers. Of the 33,460 workforce, 2015 data on headcount showed an increase of 10% compared to 2013.<sup>26,27,28</sup>

Around 23,000 staff are employed with services offering funded ELC in 2016. Just under 6,000 of those have started employment in funded ELC settings during or after 2014.

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<sup>26</sup> Scottish Social Services Council: Report on 2015 Workforce Data

<sup>27</sup> The Scottish Government: *Additional tables on Early Learning and Childcare to accompany Summary Statistics for Schools in Scotland*, No.6: 2015.

<sup>28</sup> The Scottish Government: *Additional tables on Early Learning and Childcare to accompany Summary Statistics for Schools in Scotland*, No.5: 2014.



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