

A BLUEPRINT FOR 2020: THE EXPANSION OF EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE IN SCOTLAND

ELC EXPANSION PLANNING GUIDANCE FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES

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SECTION ONE: Introduction

The Scottish Government is committed to expanding the provision of funded early learning and childcare (ELC) from 600 hours to 1140 hours by 2020, and ensuring that the expansion prioritises a high quality experience for the child, recognising the significant contribution that universally accessible ELC can make to a child's development and to closing the attainment gap.

Local authorities are responsible for implementation and delivery of ELC to their local communities, within a context of high quality learning, teaching, care and nurture, in their area. Existing ELC provision will have to be transformed to deliver 1140 hours in line with Ministers' Blueprint for 2020. The ELC Expansion Programme is designed to facilitate delivery of an enhanced service model that reflects, and is responsive to, local needs.

Our policy vision will be underpinned by a more progressive service model which prioritises and safeguards quality provision of ELC while offering parents a choice of settings. The policy approach is fundamentally provider neutral – prioritising settings that are best placed to deliver quality outcomes for children and supporting our ambition to close the attainment gap, regardless of whether they are provided by the public, private, or third sectors. Local authorities will continue to play a vital role in delivering ELC – as the primary guarantor of quality and the key enabler of flexibility and choice.

Planning for the expansion will by necessity evolve over the coming years as local authorities respond to changes in local circumstances and changes in the way parents use services. The ELC Service Models Working Group will report by March 2018, providing the operational details of the new Funding Follows the Child model, a national standard for becoming a partner provider and guidance on implementing the Scottish Living Wage across all providers. Local authorities will continue to agree funded rates at local level, but should ensure that these are set to ensure delivery of the national policy framework.

This planning guidance offers a framework to support local authorities in developing their initial plans. Local authority groups have been consulted on and informed the development of this guidance. The ELC Expansion Programme will offer local authorities additional capacity to plan for and deliver this transformation through a multi-disciplinary support team. This team will provide additional service innovation and redesign capability, lead a community of learning, and offer a source of specialist expertise on complex issues that will be common to all authorities.

Whilst some planning dependencies and assumptions will crystallise during or after the initial planning period, we anticipate that reasonable local planning assumptions can be made in order to deliver an expansion plan by 29 September 2017.

This planning guidance is intended to:

- Provide simple planning advice of specific relevance to ELC sector development;
- Support development of local authority ELC expansion plans and costings – as well as informing the national ELC Expansion Programme;
- Respect the unique context of each local authority area, recognising the value of local knowledge and understanding;
- Be outcome focused – recognising that there are a range of ways to achieve the core aims of providing ELC within the parameters of quality, accessibility, flexibility and affordability;
- Underpin the delivery support that will be made available to assist local authorities with service redesign and sharing of good practice; and

- Help local authorities to gauge the extent of the change challenge and to fully resource the programme and project management capacity needed to support their local programme, whilst continuing to deliver services focused on the quality of experience for children and families.

This planning guidance is **NOT** intended to:

- Achieve a prescriptive 'one size fits all' model of service delivery;
- Enforce engagement with the delivery support capacity – authorities will shape the nature and extent of support provided to them; and
- Require local authorities to source, or examine any data that does not have a clear purpose directly relevant to the ELC planning task.

The ELC expansion plan produced as a result of this planning guidance will be used to:

- Progress the ELC Expansion Programme by articulating local plans in a nationally consistent manner;
- Assist local authorities to ensure that their local expansion plans recognise the importance of a continued focus on the quality of the child's learning and care experience throughout a period of change;
- Support the development of a national implementation framework including financial estimates and commitments;
- Inform future Spending Reviews and discussions on funding allocations; and
- Inform the monitoring and evaluation of the ELC Expansion Programme.

SECTION TWO: Key Principles

The following key principles will underpin the service delivery planning process. Planning principles that should be evidenced in the plans include:

QUALITY

Quality is the driving principle of the ELC Expansion Programme. Early years provide the foundations for promoting secure attachment, better health, social and learning behaviours with long-term impact on improved outcomes for children. Promoting child development, curriculum, pedagogy, alignment with child and family nurture services, closing the attainment gap and transitions to the next stage of the learning journey will be a key focus of the Programme. This will be underpinned by the GIRFEC approach and *Building the Ambition*¹, the national practice guidance which sets the context for high quality ELC.

Plans will ensure that change is not detrimental to children, families or ELC providers and that at least the current level of quality of learning and care experience will be maintained during the period of change. Active steps will be taken to protect and enhance the quality of provision.

A national Quality Action Plan will be published later in 2017 that will support local quality plans.

ACCESSIBILITY

The overall capacity within Scotland's current ELC system can be redesigned to more fully meet the ambition to extend entitlement. The constraints of current service design, including current purchasing arrangements, can mean provision is underused or inaccessible to parents. Specific issues may exist around capacity and accessibility in particular locations and geographies, or with regard to ensuring access for children with additional support needs.

Plans will evidence that best use will be made of existing services and assets within the local authority, private and third sectors – with any remaining gaps addressed through creation of additional capacity. Best practice will be shared via the delivery support team to inform this service redesign process. New National Care Standards will also be published by the Care Inspectorate in Spring 2017 and a best practice Design Guide will follow in early Summer. Both documents may inform the service redesign process in terms of delivery models and physical capacity.

Additionally, capacity creation will be assisted by new regulations² that modify schedule 1 of the Schools Consultation Act 2010. Education authorities will not be required to comply with the specific consultation requirements under the 2010 Act if they want to establish new nursery schools or new nursery classes in schools, and/or relocate existing nursery schools and nursery classes in schools as part of their expansion planning for 1140 hours. This exemption will not apply to establishment or relocation proposals relating to primary or secondary schools, nor to proposed nursery school or nursery class closures, which will still have to comply with 2010 Act consultation requirements in full. These regulations will come into force on 31 March 2017, when the current Ancillary Order to the 2014 Children & Young People Act expires.

1 <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2014/08/6262/0>

2 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2017/65/contents/made>

FLEXIBILITY

Current ELC delivery models, particularly within local authorities must become more flexible and responsive to parental demand. Fully flexible services, for example, may build from current good practice in Scotland. This should include more settings offering all year round provision and/or longer opening hours, thus enhancing flexibility and choice for families. It may also include considering the delivery of early level learning across nursery and early stages primary in an integrated model.

It is assumed that expansion plans will set out the intention to deliver against parental need for flexible access, whilst taking account of two caveats:

1. Is it good for children? Is it good for families? The impact of any flexible offer on the experience of the child and, in turn, their family must be taken into account.
2. Is it operationally sustainable? Where operational sustainability is a concern, it is assumed that consideration will be given to other ways to meet the need and flex services, for example, use of childminders in a blended approach.

AFFORDABILITY

Reducing the cost of accessing ELC for parents is a significant driver in the ambition to extend the ELC entitlement. This must be set alongside the redesign of ELC services in a manner that is also affordable for local authorities and Scottish Government and delivers long-term value for money.

It is assumed that plans will aim to improve affordability for parents alongside creating a financially sustainable service model which makes most effective use of public funds. This may include considering both investment in local authority services and in new arrangements with the private and third sectors.

PHASING, COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND DEMAND LAG

The expansion will require substantial levels of investment in workforce and infrastructure which will be phased in from 2017-18 onwards to ensure that the required capacity is in place by 2020. Given the transformative nature of the expansion, and the potential structural changes that could result in the sector, it is challenging to assume that the system would be able to move smoothly from providing 600 hours to 1140 hours overnight.

Local authorities have flexibility to determine the most appropriate way to phase entitlement in their local area as they build capacity. In considering phasing, authorities should evidence consideration of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation to ensure that the families and communities who stand to benefit most from the expansion benefit first.

It is also assumed that the implementation section of the plan will take account of the local strategy for community and family engagement and take steps to manage any delays in take-up of the new entitlement as parents become aware of, and confident in, changed services. We cannot assume that simply making the service available will be enough – community and family engagement, aligned with family nurture services will be vital in creating highly valued, highly used services. Parental engagement will support the identification of priorities and assist with appropriate phasing in each area.

SECTION THREE: Planning Assumptions

ASSUMPTIONS FOR THE PLANNING EXERCISE INCLUDE:

1. Putting in place the extended ELC entitlement has the potential to transform the lives of children and families but will require significant **SERVICE REDESIGN** across the ELC sector – across public, private and third sector providers.
2. **REVENUE AND CAPITAL** funding will be made available to local authorities in line with phased plans to support cross-sectoral ELC **CHANGE** and **EXPANSION** from 2017-18 onwards, with a view to ensuring a smooth transition to Funding Follows the Child from August 2020. The Scottish Government will work with authorities to provide greater certainty over financial assumptions over the planning period.
3. Quality of the experience for children will be dependent upon a suitably **SKILLED AND QUALIFIED WORKFORCE** that focuses on leadership, valuing and developing the existing workforce, and recruiting and training a high-performing additional workforce. Local authorities will be supported by a national marketing campaign and the ELC Skills Investment Plan.
4. Growth in services must be suitably **PHASED** over the planning period (i.e. to 2020) in order to help manage community engagement, service development and wider change across the sector. Funding will be provided to support phasing.
5. Making **best use of assets** – effective expansion plans will take account of a sequential decision-making process as follows:
 - a. **Use what we have:** Making full use of existing assets within the local authority (including, workforce, potential of the natural environment, buildings and infrastructure);
 - b. **Use what we purchase:** Enhancing the use of partner assets– developing and extending existing partnership models against a default assumption of a continued mixed economy – strengthening both local authority and other provision (including, for example, childminders and blended models);
 - c. **Create what we need** – where full use of existing local authority services and assets, plus enhanced commissioning, still leaves a gap, plan to create or build new capacity, including outdoor nurseries.

SECTION FOUR: Planning Deliverable

The deliverable is an ELC expansion plan. The planning process is iterative and initial plans may be subject to change as further information emerges. The initial plan will be approved locally and is to be submitted to Scottish Government ELC Expansion Programme no later than **29 September 2017**. The impact of local committee cycles may mean that the plan is submitted in draft subject to local approval.

The plan will:

- Be created, owned and implemented by the local authority;
- Be locally approved according to the governance arrangements appropriate to each individual authority;
- Become a working document which will evolve over time (following the initial planning period);
- Balance the local ELC context around supply and demand with delivery of Ministers' Blueprint; and
- Include an implementation plan and take account of the approach proposed in this planning guidance.

SECTION FIVE: Indicative Planning Milestones

Local authorities may find it helpful to set intermediate planning milestones to support submission of a plan by 29 September.

Illustrative milestones over a 6-month planning period.

1. **End of April – Mobilised:** ELC expansion planning structures in place, including local arrangements for planning support, including accommodating local decision making/committee timeframes.
2. **End of June – Assessed:** Completed quality, operational and financial data analysis regarding current position, existing performance and utilisation.
3. **End of July – Decided:** Outcome of decision-making processes with respect to preferred options for service redesign, evidencing the planning principles, use of existing assets, enhanced purchasing arrangements and potential to create.
4. **End of September – Planned & Submitted:** ELC expansion plan including implementation plan prepared and submitted.

SECTION SIX: Key Planning Components

This section sets out a basic structure for the ELC expansion plan (including implementation plan) – authorities are not bound by this structure, but should ensure that all of these elements are included in the content of their plans. **The completed plan should be returned to elcdeliverysupport@gov.scot by 29 September 2017.**

Key Components	Chapter/Section	Description	Comments
Context	Introduction and Executive Summary		
Current Position	Summary of Current Service Delivery	A summary of key data relating to ALL ELC registered supply in the local authority area.	
		A summary of key data relating to ALL demand (i.e. current use) in the local area.	
		A comparison of supply to demand – by local community.	
		A summary of key data (quality, financial and utilisation) metrics relating to current supply arrangements (local authority and others).	
		A summary of local parent and community consultation outcomes.	

Key Components	Chapter/Section	Description	Comments
Future Position	Summary of Proposed Changes to Service Design and Local Innovation	Summary of proposed changes to service delivery model (local authority and use of private and third sector providers). Proposals relating to quality, flexibility, affordability (to parent), accessibility, and other relevant changes to process (e.g. admissions process).	Includes a statement of how population growth/decline has influenced future service design. Includes a statement regarding the relationship locally between expanded statutory provision and non-statutory provision for 0 to 16 year olds (both pre-school and out of school) emphasising continuity of progression in the child's journey.
		Description of changes to enable full use of existing local authority assets (workforce and infrastructure).	
		Description of changes to maintain and extend use of partner assets (including quality/price/volume/conditionality of service).	
		Extent to which new – Workforce to be recruited – Physical capacity may require to be built/refurbished/sourced.	

Key Components	Chapter/Section	Description	Comments
Implementation Plan	Series of Implementation Elements	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Quality 2. Phasing and Prioritisation 3. Community Engagement 4. Workforce 5. Funded providers 6. Infrastructure Requirement 7. Financial Projections (5 year projections to 2021-22) including incremental capital and revenue costs of expansion 8. Planning Assumptions including financial assumptions 9. 2017-18 expansion activity, including use of revenue and capital funding allocations 10. Project Management, Change Support & Stakeholder Engagement Plans 	<p>Based on the analysis of local data and consideration of the options for service development, an implementation plan covering all relevant areas.</p> <p>Financial projections will include both revenue and capital projections.</p>

SECTION SEVEN: Data Template

The data template has been designed to support local authorities with their planning. It is not mandatory, and is designed to offer local authorities an additional planning tool. The template is designed to:

- Support local authorities by collating information in a consistent and easy to understand way;
- Be as simple and uncomplicated as possible; and
- Recognise that most of the information gathered should be quick for local authorities to access.

The most challenging data to collect is anticipated to be child hours delivered per setting. The two most commonly used systems (NAMS & SEEMIS) tend not to carry this particular information. Should any local authority face issues gathering this data the ELC expansion programme can provide advice on a basis for estimation and benchmark.

Most financial data should be available from local authority finance systems against existing cost codes. For any costs per setting previously unallocated (e.g. catering costs left within primary school budget), local finance teams could offer support in conducting an appropriate allocation process. Data collection may draw upon Care Inspectorate and Education Scotland information sources.

The delivery support team will be able to help local authorities explore the data and the range of analytical options and insight that will become available.

APPENDIX: Table of additional detail relating specifically to implementation plan

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN	ELEMENTS	COMMENTS	CONTEXT
Implementation Planning – a series of individual plan elements	1. Quality Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Specify the basis upon which day-to-day operational quality will be maintained and enhanced per setting during the period of expansion. - Specify the basis upon which Quality will be continually improved over time. 	Quality provision must be maintained during the period of change.
	2. Phasing across local geography	Specify the basis of upon which expanded provision will be rolled out across the geography. Options might include neighbourhood by neighbourhood, school area by school area, with reference to the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation.	1140 implementation in individual settings can begin as capacity becomes available and be phased through to 2020.
	3. Community Engagement Plan	Specify the nature of the on-going engagement with local communities that supports the community to understand the changing nature of supply and the full extent to which supply is capable of adapting to their (family and community) needs.	Families and communities do not change in a uniform way, especially in a time of change over a comparatively short period. It can be expected therefore that there will be an element of 'demand lag' for the new offering that can be understood and managed via community engagement.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN	ELEMENTS	COMMENTS	CONTEXT
	4. Workforce Plan	Specify the workforce plan through the period of prioritisation including consultation with existing workforce and phasing of uptake of any additional workforce.	Areas to address expected to include: leadership planning, consultation planning, industrial relations, recruitment plan.
	5. Funded Providers	Specify the nature of future relationship with funded providers including the price paid, volume and quality requirements.	This should include consideration of the implications of Living Wage and note future development of national funded provider and quality standards.
	6. Infrastructure (Physical Estate) Plan	Specify the extent of refurbishment to the existing estate and the new build requirement.	
	7. Financial Projections (spend profile)	Specify the phased cost profile for both revenue and capital over the expansion period. Include anticipated top up revenue where appropriate.	Include reporting on 2017-18 funding allocation.
	8. Financial Assumptions to support projections	List the financial assumptions made to support financial projections.	
	9. 2017-18 expansion activity, including planned use of revenue and capital funding allocations		
	10. Project Management, Stakeholder Management and Change Support.	Specify what project management support will be made available to the change effort, include an assessment of risk and dependencies in change.	

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