

Report

Report to:	Education Resources Committee
Date of Meeting:	16 March 2021
Report by:	Executive Director (Education Resources) Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources)

Subject:	Early Learning and Childcare (1140 hours) - Update
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1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ◆ provide an update on progress made in the expansion towards the delivery of 1140 hours in light of the current pandemic,
- ◆ provide an update on the recent confirmation on the Scottish Government's decision to reinstate the statutory duty on education authorities to make 1140 hours of early learning and childcare (ELC) available to each eligible child from August 2021.

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Committee is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) that the content of the report be noted;
- (2) that the sustainable rate for funded providers 2021/2022, as detailed in paragraph 5.2, be approved; and
- (3) that approval be given to increase the establishment within Education Resources, as detailed in section 7, paragraphs 7.4 to 7.9 of the report.

3. Background

- 3.1. On 31 March 2020, the Scottish Government advised all Councils of their decision in a joint statement with COSLA, to pause the rollout of the ELC Expansion and removed the statutory duty on Local Authorities to deliver the expansion from August 2020. This decision recognised that expansion activity such as construction, recruitment and induction of staff would be severely restricted and unable to go ahead with the priority for councils shifting to provide critical childcare to key worker families and those most in need.
- 3.2. In South Lanarkshire since August 2020 the majority of eligible children have been receiving 1,140 hours of free Early Learning and Childcare.
- 3.3. On 14 December 2020 a joint letter was issued from the Scottish Government and COSLA confirming that evidence considered by the ELC Joint Delivery Board recommended that the statutory duty to deliver 1,140 hours of funded ELC should be reinstated with effect from August 2021. This recommendation has now been agreed by Scottish Ministers and COSLA.

4. Progress update

- 4.1. On 2 February 2021 the First Minister announced the Scottish Government's intention that Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) settings would re-open from 22 February. The decision for the re-opening reflects the crucial role that ELC plays in supporting child development, and the challenge of delivering this crucial support remotely.
- 4.2. Regulatory inspection activity re-commenced with 'Virtual Inspections' undertaken by the Care Inspectorate. Inspection outcomes will confirm which providers are meeting the National Standard and those where improvement work is required. Outcomes reported confirm very positive outcomes for local authority establishments recently inspected.
- 4.3. The central team have continued to provide virtual training opportunities, support and guidance and COVID support to all funded providers.
- 4.4. *Admissions/Allocation of Places*
 - 4.4.1. 7,727 children are currently attending an ELC provision with 5,365 in a local authority setting and 2362 children attending a funded provider. Currently 1,140 hours is being delivered to 86% of all eligible 2-5 year olds.
- 4.5. *New building programme*
 - 4.5.1. It is worth noting that the opening of the new build and expansion to existing nurseries in February 2021 has increased the capacity for delivering 1,140 hours of ELC and 92% of eligible children can now be accommodated.
 - 4.5.2. A list showing the progress made with opening and expanding nursery provision is shown in Appendix 1.
- 4.6. *Funded providers*
 - 4.6.1. In taking forward the Council's plans to deliver 1,140 hours of early learning and childcare, engagement and communication with all funded providers continues to be a core part of the implementation strategy. A range of activities continue such as the Partner's Consultative Forum (on-line), Funded Providers meeting (on-line), quality improvement activity on-line and in-house, support with inspection activity on line and in-house, support with the COVID pandemic implications, on-line and telephone support, the provision of guidance and support materials as well as a range of personal and professional activity.
 - 4.6.2. 111 funded providers have now been added to the Procured Service Agreement. Payments are made to funded providers 4 weeks in advance.

5. Proposal

- 5.1. In line with the procurement for funded providers there is a commitment to annually review the sustainable funding hourly rate. The current hourly rates were based on the Scottish Government's Financial Review and the IPSOS Mori review of hourly rates undertaken across the West Partnership ELC. In principle, it has now been considered that steps would be taken to move to an hourly rate across the West Partnership ELC 8 authorities. This will be achieved over a period of time.
- 5.2. It is proposed that:
 - for session 2021/2022, an hourly rate for 2-3 year olds will be £6.40 which includes, 50p per hour per funded session in line with the child's pattern of attendance.

- the hourly rate for 3-5 year olds of £5.81 which includes, 50p per hour per funded session in line with the child's pattern of attendance. There will be a requirement to monitor and report on the 'free' meal provision and the process for this will be agreed with funded providers. This means that at the point of delivery our youngest eligible 2-5 year old children will have a 'free' ELC place of up to 1,140 hours with a free meal provision

6. Partner Providers

- 6.1. Recently during the period of restrictions some funded providers closed. This resulted in keyworker/essential families and their children requiring to attend ELC provision which remained open. In line with the Scottish Government's guidance, Funded Providers continued to be paid for all contracted children during periods of restriction whether they remained open or closed.
- 6.2. In recognition of the impact the coronavirus has on the business community, as part of the Scottish Government's support for providers a 'transitional fund' was made available. Education Resources complied with the requirements of this fund and administered the process. 83 grants were awarded with a total fund of £512,000.
- 6.3. The Scottish Government recently made available the Temporary Restrictions Fund which is available to ELC providers who remained open during the lockdown from January 2021, for vulnerable children, children who are eligible for a funded 2-year old place and the children of key workers during the period of temporary restrictions. The funding is intended for day care of children providers who were operating on a restricted capacity, childminding services providing childcare to 12 or more children and out of school care providers. The grant provides a four-weekly payment for the period of restrictions, in addition to any other support that may have been claimed previously. Local Authorities will administer the grant amounts which will vary according to the number of Care Inspectorate registered places and will be paid in arrears. Applications opened on 4 February and closed on 1 March 2021.

7. Next steps

- 7.1. The Council will continue to work in partnership with the Scottish Government, COSLA, the Care Inspectorate Scotland and establishments to continually review and assess the impact the current pandemic with the key priority being the health and wellbeing of children, young people, staff and communities.
- 7.2. The Council is currently reviewing its implementation plan for the delivery of 1,140 hours early learning and childcare in terms of the actions that require to be taken for August 2021:
 - prepare for the allocation of ELC places for sessions 2021/2022 - (March 2021)
 - prepare for the allocation for funded providers for session 2021/2022 – (March 2021)
 - new build nursery and adaptations to existing nursery accommodation
 - work with the Care Inspectorate regarding inspections and variations
 - ensure workforce recruitment is completed for staff
 - prepare communication and engagement with parents and families
 - ensure strategies are confirmed to meet the requirements within the National Standard
 - ensure the delivery of a funded lunch provision
 - prepare process for annual review of funded providers in line with procurement guidelines
- 7.3. A phased recruitment plan was underway prior to the pandemic with adverts placed and applications received for Head and Depute posts, team leaders and early years

workers and early years support workers. Recruitment of staff commenced on a phased basis using on-line personnel systems. This resulted in appointments of a range of posts, 8 Heads of Establishments, 9 Depute Head (52 week), 5 Depute Head (38 week), 8 Team Leaders (52 week), 41 Early Years Workers (52 week) and 96 Early Years Support Workers, 52 and 38 week appointments.

- 7.4. The central admissions process was agreed by the Education Resources Committee in January 2021. This will mean that places will be confirmed by the end of April 2021. There will also be a rollout of the new Nursery Admissions Management System (NAMS) from Spring 2021. In order to support this process the 2 temporary Clerical Assistants posts within the central Support Services team require to be made permanent. In addition, in support of the introduction and rollout of the new SEEMIS/NAMS admissions management system, it is proposed that a temporary Development and Support post is introduced to ensure the new programme is fully implemented.
- 7.5. An outcome of the phased implementation was the need for the introduction of an Early Years Support Assistant. The creation of this post will support the delivery of a flexible responsive service across local authority establishments operating a full day model. This was extended to nursery classes in response to the need to meet regulatory requirements for staff/child ratios particularly over the middle of the day.
- 7.6. In order to deliver the final part of the Expansion Plan from August 2021, the posts shown in table 1 are required and will be funded from the 2021/2022 revenue funding allocation for ELC.
- 7.7. The staffing requirement for the provision of ELC final phase expansion from August 2021 is outlined below. This will provide an increase of 429 places and deliver 5606 fte places.

Table 1 – Permanent Posts:

Post *	Proposed Number of Posts (FTE) Permanent	Grade	SCP Range	Hourly Rate	Annual Salary	Gross Cost inc on costs 30.3% (proposed posts) ***
Early Years Practitioner Final phase - 52 week	50	Grade 2 Level 3	SCP 46 - SCP 48	£14.05 - £14.48	£27,105 - £27,935	£1,765,889 £1,819,934
Early Years Practitioner Final phase – 38 week	10	Grade 2 Level 3	SCP 46 - SCP 48	£14.05 - £14.48	£24,137 - £24,876	£314,505 £324,130
School Support Assistant 35 hour posts 52 week	9	Grade 1 Level 4	SCP 30 - SCP 31	£11.12 - £11.29	£20,293 - £20,603	£237,975 £241,613
School Support Assistant Term time	0.58	Grade 1 Level 4	SCP 30 - SCP 31	£11.12 - £11.29	£18,071 - £18,347	£13,657 £13,866
Early Years Support Assistant Phase 5 - 52 week	8	Grade 1 Level 1 - Level 3	SCP 20 - SCP 27	£9.60 - £10.64	£18,520 - £20,526	£182,618 £202,402
Early Years Support Assistant Phase 5 – Term time	34.77	Grade 1 Level 1 - Level 3	SCP 20 - SCP 27	£9.60 - £10.64	£18,520 - £20,526	£403,883 £447,637
TOTAL Permanent Posts	112.35					£2,918,527 £3,049,582

Table 2 – Temporary/Fixed term posts

[illegible]

* all posts will be recruited for the beginning of the term - August 2021 in line with the opening and/or expansion of the new facilities and the expansion programme.

- 7.8. Staffing levels for 2021/2022 have been calculated based on ELC ratios using current projections of returners aged 0-5 years for August 2021 a forecast of admission for new starts and taking account of deferrals and 2-year olds. Staffing levels may need to be adjusted following the completion of the admissions process which is currently underway and will be confirmed in the summer 2021.
- 7.9. Due to the paused recruitment the role of Early Years Support Assistant will be introduced into the Early Years Model from January 2021, this creates improved opportunities for a greater range of posts within an Early Years setting and improved scope of succession planning. Initially up to 68 fte posts have been appointed with further posts to be recruited.
- 7.10. The committee is invited to endorse the staffing proposals outlined in the table above.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1. The overall 2021/2022 revenue allocation for ELC expansion as notified by the Scottish Government through the Early Learning and Childcare Multi-Year Revenue and Capital allocation letter of 1 May 2018 is £32.227m.
- 8.2. The cost of establishing the new posts detailed in paragraph 5.3 above totals £4,196,247 based on employees being at the highest Spinal Column Point within their Grade. All costs will be met from the 2021/2022 revenue allocation. In addition to the cost of new staffing, the revenue budget £32.227m will also meet the costs of existing commitments for current expansion including graduates, modern apprentices, training costs, funded partner costs and lunch provision as well as new commitments for 2021/2022 expansion delivery including partner costs including the sustainable rate, support for per capita, resources, training and adaptations spend.
- 8.3. The employee costs now reflect the posts at the evaluated grades and the cost of this can be managed within revenue budget and reserves in 2021/22.

9. Employee implications

- 9.1. The employee implications in terms of the proposal in this report have been considered by Finance and Corporate Resources and the respective funding is in place.
- 9.2. A range of training and opportunities for staff is highlighted in Appendix 2.

10. Climate Change, Sustainability and Environmental Implications

- 10.1. There are no direct implications arising from the recommendations in this update report.

11. Other implications

- 11.1. The Education Resources Risk Register did highlight that the delivery of 1,140 hours of early learning and childcare was a potential risk in terms of any factors that may impact on the full implementation deadline. Covid19 was an unforeseen circumstance. This continues to be kept under review.

12. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

- 12.1. An equality impact assessment will be undertaken on the revised implementation plan in due course and communication and engagement continues to take place with partner providers, other stakeholders and the trade unions.
- 12.2. Communication and engagement with parents and families on the implications of the change to the legislation with regards to 1140 hours of early learning and childcare and the contingencies being put in place are as follows:-
- the admissions process for applications received by the end of February which is the closing date is complete. Parents will be informed by letter on 26th April 2021 as indicated in prior communication with families to confirm the delivery.
 - families will now be informed that all eligible children aged 2-5 years will receive 1140 hours per year of free Early Learning and Childcare from August 2021;
 - the admissions process centres on 0-5 year olds and children whose parents have decided to defer their entry to primary school;

Tony McDaid
Executive Director (Education Resources)

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Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources)

19 February 2021

Link(s) to Council Values/Ambitions/Objectives

- Improve achievement, raise educational attainment and support lifelong learning
- Protect vulnerable children, young people and adults
- Work with communities and partners to promote high quality, thriving and sustainable communities

Previous References

- Education Resources Committee – 19 May 2020
- Education Resources Committee – 6 August 2019

List of Background Papers

- Early Learning and Childcare (1140 hours) – implementation plan

Contact for Further Information

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

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**Early Learning and Childcare
Progress on Provision across South Lanarkshire**

The 1,140 hours expansion building approved by the Council recommenced.

New Build Nurseries

Woodhill ELC, Kirkmuirhill opened in September 2020
Kirkstyle ELC, Carluke opened in November 2020
Millburn Nursery, Cambuslang opened November 2020
Rooftop Nursery, East Kilbride opening February 2021
Glengowan Nursery Class, Larkhall opened October 2020

Expansion to existing Nurseries

Carnwath Nursery Class, Carnwath – increased August 2020
Murray Primary Nursery Class, East Kilbride – increased November 2020
Mount Cameron Primary Nursery Class, East Kilbride – increased November 2020
Mount Cameron Primary Nursery Class Gaelic, East Kilbride – increased November 2020
Netherburn Nursery Class – increased November 2020

Completion dates for on-going building work

Avondale ELC, Strathaven – opening February 2021
Springlaw ELC, Rutherglen – opening March 2021
Lightburn ELC, Cambuslang – opening April 2021
Kilbryde ELC, East Kilbride – opening April 2021
St Columbkille's Nursery Class, Rutherglen – work complete - opening August 2021
Newfield Nursery Class, Stonehouse – increased provision August 2021
St Elizabeth's Nursery Class, Hamilton – increased provision August 2021

The new ELC provision for Bothwell/Uddingston will be considered at the Planning Committee in March. Work is underway to ensure delivery of 1,140 hours for all eligible children from August 2021 with a range of temporary solutions.

Work continues with the Care Inspectorate to ensure registration for the new nurseries and variations for extended nurseries to ensure regulatory requirements are met.

Resources have been sourced for all of the above establishments.

Training Opportunities and Opportunities

Training for all staff continued throughout the lockdown period of the pandemic. It is worth noting some highlights shown below:

- professional development for ELC staff has been the Froebel Certificate Childhood Practice which has been delivered in partnership with the University of Edinburgh. Cohorts of 60 participants will undertake certificated qualification so there is a 'froebelian' practitioner in all local authority nurseries and in some funded providers who volunteered to participate in the qualification.
- 5 ELC Foundation Apprentices are engaged in the level 6 qualification and in placement in Local Authority establishments
- 40 Modern Apprentices are currently engaged in the level 7 qualification in-house training programme
- 3 Early Years Workers are undertaking the Graduate Apprentice Early Learning and Childcare Degree Level 7 with the University West of Scotland with a further 3 qualified Modern Apprentices progressing in Year 2 at level 8.
- A further 15 Early Years Staff are undertaking the Graduate Apprentice degree with University West of Scotland at level 8
- 14 early years staff are engaged in and funded to complete the BA Early Childhood Practice
- 96 Early Years Support Workers will be trained to SCQF Level 6.
- 6 senior staff from funded providers are completing the Graduate Apprentice degree with University Highland and Islands
- 29 places on the Peep Family Learning Programme and 35 places on the Virtual Winter Outdoor Training Programme, both supported by the Scottish Government.