



Early Learning and Childcare: a guide for childminders

January 2016



We acknowledge the support of the Scottish Government through the Third Sector Early Intervention Fund, managed on behalf of Scottish Government by the Big Lottery Fund in Scotland

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The Scottish Government provides funding to allow three and four-year-old children to receive 600 hours of funded Early Learning and Childcare every year. Some families with two-year-old children also qualify to receive the funded Early Learning and Childcare. [What is the eligibility criteria?](#)

Early Learning and Childcare can be provided by; local council nursery, nursery class in a primary school, private day nursery, independent school nursery, playgroup or a **registered childminder**.

Childminders and Early Learning and Childcare

Whether or not childminders are commissioned to provide funded Early Learning and Childcare is down to your local authority.

SCMA has gathered information on the use of childminders to deliver funded Early Learning and Childcare across the 32 local authority areas. The Act calls for delivery to be **flexible** and meet the needs of children and families. Our concern is that this is not happening across Scotland. The arrangements for delivery of this care vastly varies across each local authority; with childminders not considered as partner providers at all in some areas, to successful placements being arranged in others.

What can a childminder do if the local authority won't contract with them?

Find out what's happening in your area. How does the local authority deliver funded Early Learning and Childcare? Is this provision flexible, as called for by the Act? Check on your local authority website. Information will probably be in the Education section of the website where you can also find a telephone number to find out more. Alternatively, check the Scottish Family Information Service website: scottishfamilies.gov.uk.

Ask parents what they want. Do they want their child to be looked after in a nursery when you can provide consistent, high-quality care? Possibly not. Ask them to make their feelings clear to the local authority by writing to the local authority and their local councillor.

Let SCMA know exactly what's happening in your area. Write to us at information@childminding.org with 'Early Learning and Childcare' in the title of your email.

Write to your local authority, local councillor and MSP. Help them understand about the quality of your service and that your small ratio is often more suitable for 2 year olds. Make it clear to them the impact this could have on your business. Contact details can be found at writetothem.com. A [template letter](#) is available to download from the [Membership Dashboard](#).

What is SCMA doing to help?

We have been gathering as much information as possible about the delivery of funded Early Learning and Childcare in each local authority. We continue to try and engage with local authorities on this issue however, in some areas, this is proving very difficult.

SCMA Chief Executive, Maggie Simpson, has met with the First Minister, the Minister for Children and Young People and other MSPs.

We have also engaged with Scottish Government, Education Scotland, the Care Inspectorate, ADES, Children in Scotland and various other organisations to keep them informed of the lack of progress in some areas.

A report produced by SCMA has been presented to the Scottish Government.

We will support any childminder who is willing to approach their local authority to question why they will not contract with childminders to deliver Early Learning and Childcare. If you would like further support please call us on 01786 445377 or email information@childminding.org with 'Early Learning and Childcare' in the title of your email.

Whether or not local authorities are contracting with childminders to deliver Early Learning and Childcare is set out in the table below:

Local Authority Area	Total no. of childminders in area*	Actively using their childminding services for eligible 2 year olds	Childminding an option but few if any placements as yet	No apparent plans to use their childminding services	Comments
Scottish Borders	132	√			5 2 year olds placed and a pilot for 3 and 4 year olds is ongoing
West Lothian	275	√			19 2 year olds currently accessing ELCC from c/ms
Argyll & Bute	83	√			22 Community Childminders delivering ELCC for 2 year olds
Aberdeen City	162	√			Five 2 year olds placed with c/ms
Dumfries & Galloway	138	√			Five 2 year olds placed with c/m's
North Lanarkshire	369	√			Placements with c/m's underway following tender process
Angus	169	√			3 placements underway with Community Childminders
Highland	315	√			15 childminders deliver ELC to 2 year olds
East Ayrshire	207	√			Two 2 year olds accessing ELC from c/m
West Dunbartonshire	53	√			Contract with c/m's to deliver ELC to 2 year olds
North Ayrshire	189	√			Contract with c/m's to deliver ELC to 2 year olds
Orkney	36		√		No parental interest so far
Renfrewshire	90		√		Delivering services via established provision and increased staffing levels
Shetland Islands	20		√		C/m will only be approved when a suitable public offering is not available locally
Western Isles	25		√		May use c/m's from 2016 onwards to address shortfall
East Dunbartonshire	141		√		Use Community Childminders for 2 year olds
Midlothian	85		√		Meeting to be held with c/m's in January
Inverclyde	59		√		Increasing local provision and staffing levels to meet statutory obligations
Moray	126		√		No parental requests for c/m placements
East Lothian	137		√		Will use cm's for delivery but no parental interest so far
Aberdeenshire	316			√	Using a combination of local authority and private providers
Dundee	172			√	Statutory obligation met with local authority provision & partner providers
Fife	508			√	No apparent plans to use cm's yet for delivery despite strong Community Childminding Service in the area.
East Renfrewshire	154			√	Will deliver 52 week flexibility in a number of their centres
Falkirk	216			√	No intention to contract with c/m's and opening new Early Years Centres
Glasgow	188			√	Using local authority and partner provider nurseries
Perth and Kinross	186			√	Using local authority and partner provider nurseries
South Lanarkshire	309			√	Not considering using c/m's despite I registered with HMIE
Edinburgh	387			√	Opening 3 Early Years Centres. SCMA met with LA to discuss ELCC delivery
South Ayrshire	121			√	Council met with c/m's in October
Clackmannanshire	67			√	Using local authority and partner provider nurseries
Stirling	129			√	Using local authority and partner provider nurseries

*Numbers correct as of November 2015

Information correct at time of publication. For further information about delivery of ELC please contact your Local Authority directly.