

SCMA Guidance: A Blueprint for 2020

The Expansion of Early Learning and Childcare in Scotland

This is an important time for childminders, and it's vital your voices are heard. Please read through the Blueprint for 2020 document to understand the government's plans for Early Learning and Childcare (ELC), and how they could affect your childminding service.

[Read the Blueprint for 2020 consultation document in full.](#)

To help, SCMA has selected six questions from the Blueprint for 2020 consultation that we think are most relevant to childminders, and provided you with some 'example' key points to get you started.

The following key points are for guidance purposes only. Please feel free to answer the consultation questions in your own words and include as much detail as you can.

[Respond to the Blueprint for 2020 consultation online.](#)

Question 2

What support is required to ensure that the ELC workforce have the skills, knowledge and capacity to deliver high quality provision for two year olds? How can the ELC sector best meet the specific learning, developmental and environmental needs of two year olds? What approach should be taken on the transition for these children when they turn three?

Suggested key points :

- A childminding setting offers quality care and support for these very young children.
- Childminders offer blended care to wrap around nursery provision, when the child turns three.
- Childminding services can be flexible to meet the individual needs of the child and family.
- The low adult-to-child ratios allows for individualised care, and meeting the needs of the child.

Question 10

What more can we do to promote and support the involvement of childminders in the entitlement to ELC? What are the barriers, if any, to becoming a childminder? How can we ensure quality while preserving the unique value of homebased care?

Suggested key points:

- Develop a national TV and radio advertising campaign to promote the benefits of using childminders to parents and families.
- Highlight that local choice is available for all parents and families, with the option of choosing a childminder or accessing blended service provision.
- Provide childminders with an equitable rate of pay.

Question 13

How can we support higher take-up rates amongst eligible two year olds, and other groups less likely to access entitlement?

Suggested key points:

- Use evidence and testimonials from families already receiving ELC from a childminder to promote the benefits.
- Use case studies to showcase different types of families accessing different types of ELC provision through their entitlement, and then promote the benefits of each.
- Dismiss the myths and rumours regarding the guarantee of a pre-school place at nursery.
- Highlight that parents don't have to take the full entitlement and can opt to use fewer hours.

Question 17

Do parents and carers face any barriers in accessing support with the costs of ELC provision (beyond the funded entitlement)? What more can we do to ensure additional hours are affordable?

Suggested key points:

- It is difficult to budget when additional hours are often unpredictable for working parents, and not available as a regular contract.
- Childcare costs are difficult to separate, when you include the contributions that parents receive from Working Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit and soon with Universal Credit.
- There are regularly delays in receiving Working Tax Credit especially for new childcare arrangements.
- Childcare payments need to be paid in advance and it's not always possible to budget for deposits.
- Childcare college payments are paid very late following the start of a new childcare arrangement, and the payment methods and schedule can be very unpredictable.

Question 18

How can ELC providers, particularly private and third sector providers, be encouraged to extend capacity?

Suggested key points:

- Increasing capacity for a childminder requires applying for a variation from the Care Inspectorate.
- Taking on a childminding assistant or increasing from the standard number of children in a service (to more than the 6 children under the age of 12) would normally lead to a referral to the Local Authority Planning Department. In some local authority areas, this leads to a very expensive and time consuming process.
- Working alongside another childminder would mean cancelling an existing Care Inspectorate registration and setting up a new partnership registration, which could take up to six months.

Question 19

What funding model would best support our vision for high quality and flexible ELC provision, which is accessible and affordable for all?

Suggested key points:

- Regardless of who holds the funds, they should only be used for registered ELC providers.
- Parents should have more of a choice in their type of provider, rather than the local authority being in control.
- Payments must be timely and in advance to protect the viability of private and third sector ELC providers.