

# Early Learning and Childcare



**scma**

Scottish  
Childminding  
Association

*committed to quality childcare*

The full report on the current state of childminding services in Scotland to deliver funded Early Learning and Childcare to eligible two year olds.

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## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Only **15 local authorities** across Scotland are currently partnering with childminders to deliver funded Early Learning and Childcare (ELC). The remaining **17 local authorities** are either working towards partnership or have no apparent plans to use childminder services to deliver ELC within their locality areas.
  - There are **5,954 professional** childminding services in Scotland, providing the capacity to mind **34,220** children (Care Inspectorate Report, November 2016).
  - Over **94%** of childminders meet the expected quality grading to deliver funded ELC (Care Inspectorate Report, November 2016)
  - **Alarmingly** childminders are starting to be put out of business in Scotland as children are moved to funded provision.
  - Just over **10%** of childminders in Scotland are registered as partner providers.
  - A hugely disappointing **2.1%** are actually delivering Early Learning and Childcare with eligible two year olds. Only **582** are partner providers with only **114** actually delivering ELC with eligible two year olds and **four** delivering ELC with three and four year olds.
  - **Over 66%** of the SCMA membership has signed a mandate asking us to lobby for change.
- 1.1. This report draws together the available information on the ELC funded places, operating in local authorities throughout Scotland, with a focus on how each is progressing with their plans to deliver ELC allowing parents an appropriate degree of choice when deciding how to access services within their local communities.
  - 1.2. The report explains the importance of the inclusion of childminding services in the delivery of ELC and summarises the range of information available within each local authority area. It is a factual report that shares updated information around the levels of commissioning of childminding services in each local authority area to deliver funded hours of ELC as outlined in the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. It summarises with recommendations as to how this can be improved in order to deliver high quality, flexible, accessible, choices to children and families.
  - 1.3. The Scottish Government is committed to encouraging high quality, flexible ELC which is accessible and affordable for all families. It has pledged to increase the provision of funded ELC to 1140 hours per year by 2020, for children who are three or four years old, as well as for two year olds whose parents/carers are on qualifying benefits and are eligible for the 600 hours free entitlement through the Children & Young People's Act 2014.
  - 1.4. Funded ELC places are a big help for families. They're good for children – giving them the chance to learn and play with other children. They also help families financially as free places can contribute towards other ELC commitments and support parents to work, train or study. SCMA anticipates that for most children we will see a model of blended services being developed to meet the needs of children and families as recommended in the recent report 'Shifting the Curve'.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0049/00492430.pdf>

## 2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 This report provides a full summary on the current use of childminding services by Scottish local authorities to deliver funded ELC to eligible two year olds.

2.2 Childminding is probably the least understood service in the childcare sector, often thought of as little more than complimentary to all the other more recognised service. Childminders don't quite fit – working alone in their own homes and apparently unable to integrate with other early years services for support or training. However, with over 5,954 childminders in Scotland caring for over 34,220 children, childminding is without doubt an essential early years' service which needs protected.

2.3 Childminding offers:

- **A unique family day care service**

In practice, childminding is an entirely unique family daycare service that builds strong, sometimes long lasting relationship with families. Research shows that good quality Early Learning and Childcare helps a child's development, giving children the chance to learn and play with friends in a natural family-style setting.

- **Transitions**

Childminders play a pivotal role in the lives of many families and the first transition into a new caring situation is just one that childminders will handle in their support of the children in their care. As children become eligible for a funded ELC place the children may spend part of the day with the childminder and part in another setting. Far from being a problem, these flexible arrangements give the children the best opportunity to have a variety of experiences and the management of these transitions is standard for childminders to arrange. In addition, some children become eligible for a childminding place either though economic eligibility or due to family difficulties. The management of these transitions requires additional skill from the childminder to ensure careful transfer of information leading to improved outcomes for the children.

- **A career**

Childminding is a dynamic and evolving career. Registered childminders are self-employed and run their own business. Working from their own homes, they offer a unique, flexible approach – looking after small groups of children across a varied age range, in a family setting.

- **Highly graded childcare**

Possibly one of the least known facts about childminding is that it grades more highly than other childcare services (which includes nurseries). In the November 2016 Care Inspectorate Report, 94.2% of childminders are rated as good, very good or excellent across all quality measures. The Care Inspectorate ensures that the childminder focuses on the child's needs and that their home is suitable for caring for other people's children.

- **A specialist community service**

Specialist childminding services are now commissioned in many local authorities as community childminders. Evidence shows that this unique service has a lasting benefit to children's social and emotional development which is particularly important for eligible twos.

2.4 SCMA is a third sector membership organisation established over 25 years ago. The Association has a membership of over 4,500 childminders Scotland-wide, equivalent to over 82% of Scotland's childminders. It is the only organisation in Scotland representing childminding.

### 3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The landscape of ELC in Scotland is undergoing transformational change. This report draws together the available information on the ELC systems operating in local authorities throughout Scotland with a focus on how each is progressing plans to deliver ELC within their local communities.
- 3.2 Through the 2014 Children & Young People (Scotland) Act the annual entitlement to funded ELC provision increased from 475 hours (12 hours a week over 38 weeks) to 600 hours (or 16 hours a week over 38 weeks) for all three and four year olds, and for those two year olds who stand to benefit most. This was accompanied by increased flexibility of provision to meet the needs of parents. In 2015 SCMA was commissioned by the Scottish Government to produce a detailed report on the current use of childminding services to deliver funded ELC to eligible two year olds.

### 4 OBJECTIVES

- 4.1 The objectives of the report are:
  - ***To explain the importance of the inclusion of childminding services in the delivery of ELC.***
  - ***To investigate the levels of commissioning of childminding services in each local authority area in Scotland to deliver the funded hours of ELC as outlined in the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.***
  - ***To make recommendations as to how this can be improved in order to deliver high-quality, flexible, accessible choices to children and families.***
- 4.2 Local authorities should be confident that quality will not be compromised by commissioning with their highly graded childminding services. Discussions have already taken place and are ongoing between Education Scotland, Care Inspectorate, ADES and SCMA. These have proved very promising and indicate that the evidence already being collected by childminders for the Care Inspectorate against the Wellbeing Indicators is in line with expectation from Education Scotland in relation to the Pre-Birth to Three Curriculum.

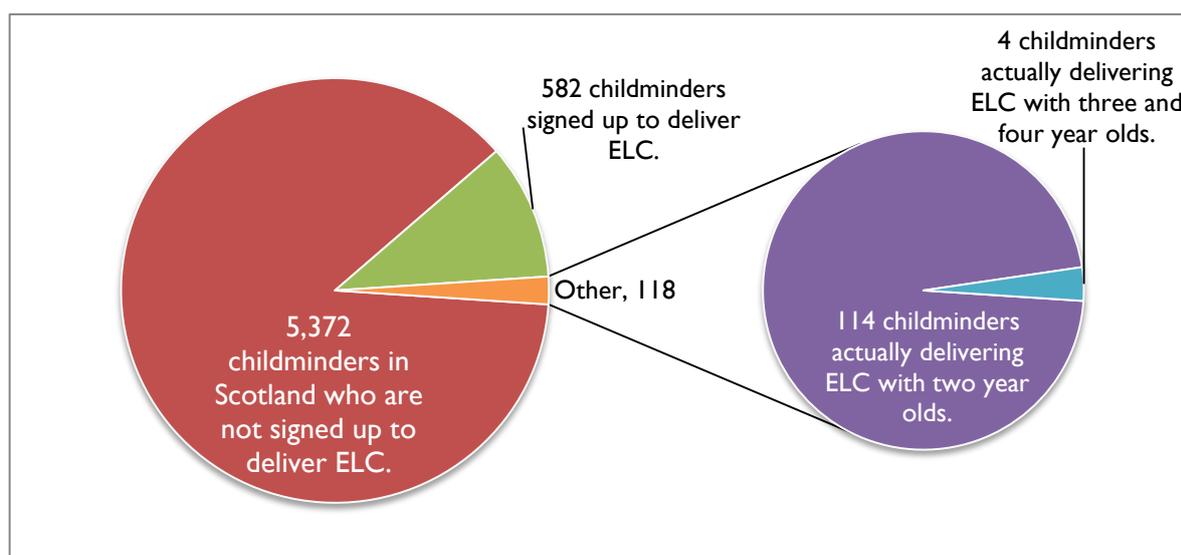
### 5 THE CURRENT STATE OF CHILDMINDING IN SCOTLAND

- 5.1 The Scottish Government is committed to encouraging high quality ELC providing flexible patterns or models of provisions offering choice, accessibility which is affordable for all families. It has pledged to increase the provision of funded ELC to 1140 hours per year by 2020, for children who are three or four years old, as well for two year olds whose parents/carers are on qualifying benefits and are eligible for the 600 hours free entitlement through the Children & Young People's Act 2014.
- 5.2 With the assistance of funding from Scottish Government, SCMA is working with and supporting local authorities and childminders across Scotland to deliver ELC places for three and four year olds and eligible two year olds.
- 5.3 The landscape of ELC in Scotland is undergoing transformational change. SCMA has drawn together available information on the ELC systems operating in Local Authorities throughout Scotland, with a focus on how each is progressing plans to deliver ELC within their local communities. It makes for very disturbing reading.

- 5.4 SCMA is extremely concerned about the current use of childminding services to deliver funded ELC. Currently only 15 out of 32 local authorities are working with childminders as partner providers to deliver ELC with eligible two, three and four year olds. It is known that only 582 childminders are included within local commissioning strategies to deliver funded ELC places.
- 5.5 The implications are limiting choice, accessibility and flexibility of services for parents in some areas and we would argue limiting the success of providing improved outcomes for some children
- 5.6 Each local authority is continuing to expand their own provision and many are not making use of the high quality, flexible childminding services that already exist. If this trend continues, then professional childminding services in Scotland may cease to exist. Ideally SCMA would like to see a model of either a full day with a childminder or a blended services being developed to meet the needs of children and families as recommended in the report 'Shifting the Curve'.

## 6 FUNDED ENTITLEMENT WITHIN LOCAL AUTHORITIES

- 6.1 SCMA is concerned about the current use of childminding services to deliver funded ELC. Currently only 15 out of 32 local authorities are working with childminders as partner providers to deliver ELC with eligible two, three and four year olds.
- 6.2 There are **5,954** childminders across Scotland. It is known that **only 582** childminders are included within local commissioning strategies to deliver funded ELC places. **Over 5,372 aren't**. The implications are limiting choice, accessibility and flexibility of services for parents in some areas. Each local authority is continuing to expand their own provision and many are not making use of the high-quality, flexible childminding services that already exist.
- 6.3 From the research and statistical analysis SCMA is able to advise that:
  - **only 582** childminders in Scotland are commissioned to deliver ELC with eligible two, three and four year olds
  - **114** childminders are actually delivering ELC with eligible two year olds
  - **only four** childminders are delivering ELC with three and four year olds



6.4 The following pages are an assessment of the current use of childminding services to deliver ELC across the 32 local authority areas. Three of these areas also contract with childminding services for three and four year olds;

- one childminding service in Dumfries and Galloway
- one in South Lanarkshire where this has happened for a number of years
- two childminders in Scottish Borders who are into the third year of a pilot.

6.5 SCMA would anticipate that for many children we will see a model of blended services being developed to meet the needs of children and families as recommended in the recent report 'Shifting the Curve'.<sup>2</sup> Included are case studies which illustrate the range of ways that childminding is making a difference for children and families. Information has been difficult to find in some areas but is accurate to the best of our ability. We welcome any new information from local authorities.

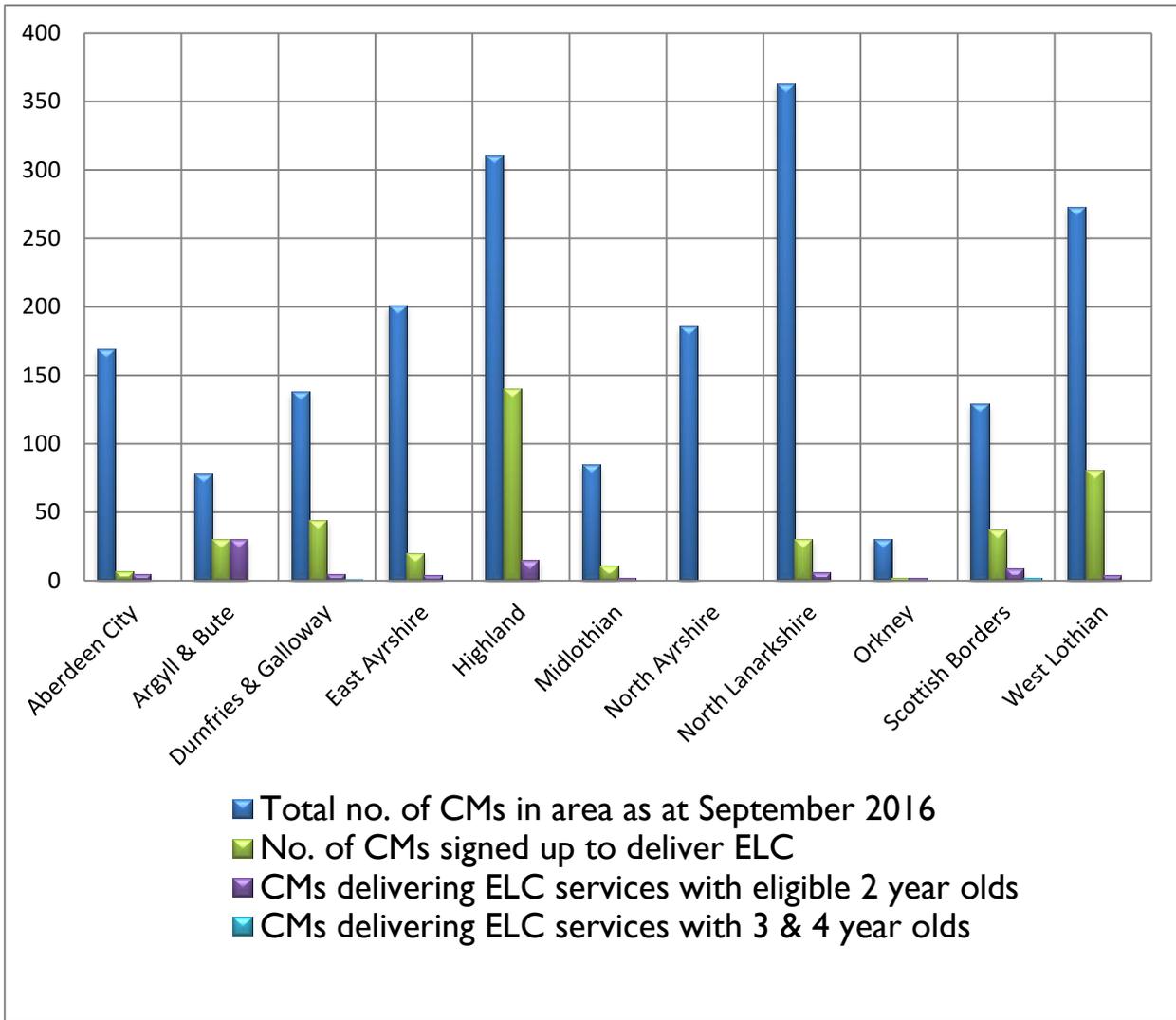
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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0049/00492430.pdf>

## Use of childminding services for funded ELC for eligible two's and three & four year olds

Local authority area	Total no. of childminders in area as at December 2016	Total approved as partner providers	Childminders delivering ELC services with eligible two year olds	Childminders delivering ELC services with three and four year olds
Aberdeen City	173	17	6	0
Argyll & Bute	84	28	11	0
City of Glasgow	191	25	3	0
Dumfries & Galloway	136	46	10	8
East Ayrshire	198	26	4	0
Highland	303	15	15	0
Midlothian	86	11	2	0
Moray	122	9	1	0
North Ayrshire	179	75	42	0
North Lanarkshire	366	93	6	0
Orkney	30	2	2	0
Scottish Borders	130	39	12	2
South Ayrshire	116	3	3	0
South Lanarkshire	304	1	0	1
West Lothian	270	81	12	0
Aberdeenshire	345	0	0	0
Angus	172	0	0	0
City of Edinburgh	376	0	0	0
Clackmannanshire	73	0	0	0
Dundee	167	0	0	0
East Dunbartonshire	140	0	0	0
East Lothian	133	0	0	0
East Renfrewshire	149	0	0	0
Falkirk	214	0	0	0
Fife	485	0	0	0
Inverclyde	60	0	0	0
Perth and Kinross	187	0	0	0
Renfrewshire	99	0	0	0
Shetland Islands	18	0	0	0
Stirling	127	0	0	0
West Dunbartonshire	53	0	0	0
Western Isles	23	0	0	0

\*Numbers correct as at February 2017



Local Authority	Next Steps
<b>Aberdeen City</b>	
<p><b>The "Me2" pilot is currently underway working with seven childminders delivering ELC for eligible two year olds only.</b></p>	<p>Pilot established to work with six childminders for eligible two's. Working title - "Me 2". Childminders issued observation booklets by email to fill in for each child. We are working with SG, NHS Health Scotland and the LA on a test of change on how to build knowledge and raise the profile of the benefits of using a childminding service for ELC for twos. This has resulted in 12 referrals.</p> <p>The area has a well-established community childminding service. Children placed with a community childminder who is also part of the 'Me2' pilot are able to stay with that childminder.</p>
<b>Aberdeenshire</b>	
<p><b>Aberdeenshire is really keen to work with childminders to deliver ELC initially for two year olds.</b></p> <p><i>(SG Trial)</i></p>	<p>Three joint information sessions, attended by 120 childminders, took place in Oct 2016. The pilot areas are Aboyne, Huntly, Ellon, Meldrum, Mintlaw and Portlethen. Those who have expressed an interest will be invited to attend a meeting in April/May with a view to the pilot starting in August.</p>
<b>Angus</b>	
<p><b>Angus has created a working group to implement the locality ELC plan.</b></p> <p><i>(SG Trial)</i></p>	<p>Two joint information sessions attended by approximately 30 childminders took place in November 2016. Following the sessions a FAQs leaflet is being developed and shared with childminders. Pilot areas are still to be confirmed.</p>
<b>Argyll &amp; Bute</b>	
<p><b>Childminders are actively delivering ELC for eligible two year olds. Unfortunately there are not enough childminders across Argyll &amp; Bute, more childminders are needed.</b></p> <p><i>(SG Trial)</i></p>	<p>28 childminders are signed up and delivering ELC with eligible two year olds and 11 are delivering it. Through the Scottish Government trial an extension from part-time to full time provision for two to five year olds will be made available through working with Mull &amp; Iona Community Trusts with local childminders.</p>
<b>Clackmannanshire</b>	
<p><b>Clackmannanshire Council</b></p>	<p>Clackmannanshire Council held an information evening for childminders in January 2017. A follow up evening was organised at Alva Academy in February.</p>

<b>Dumfries &amp; Galloway</b>	
<b>Parents have the option to use a childminder but few are choosing to for various reasons. (SG Trial)</b>	46 childminders are signed up to deliver ELC with eligible two year olds but currently only ten childminders are actually delivering it. Parents though are offered childminding alongside other places. Eight three and four year olds have also been placed with childminders. The local SCMA Childminding Development Officer (CDO) will support childminders involved in the trial (running from August 2017-August 2018), who will be commissioned to provide additional hours of ELC through a blended model of delivery with other local providers. Childminders from the DG86 and those in the surrounding area currently minding under-fives, have been invited to register to provide ELC for two to five year olds as part of the 1140 ELC trial.
<b>Dundee</b>	
<b>Identifying a pilot area within Dundee using childminders as an ELC option for parents to choose from. (SG Trial)</b>	Dundee City Council plan to work with a couple of childminders to deliver a blended ELC model of delivery, with eligible two year olds. The trial specifically targets children at risk.  To date though they do not appear to have other plans to involve their childminding services.
<b>East Ayrshire</b>	
<b>(SG Trial)</b>	26 childminders are contractually signed to deliver ELC with eligible two year olds, four childminders delivering it. Childminders are involved with the East Ayrshire trial.
<b>East Dunbartonshire</b>	
<b>No recent contact, provision delivered through local providers, not childminders.</b>	
<b>East Lothian</b>	
<b>All provision being delivered through local providers, not childminders.</b>	SCMA has met with East Lothian council. They report that they have set up a meeting for local childminders on 28 March to discuss the way forward. Around 30 childminders attended the meeting. No definite plans appear to be in place for the future. The council do offer childminding as an option for eligible 2s. They confirm that childminding will only be offered if no nursery place is available.
<b>East Renfrewshire</b>	
	The next meeting with East Renfrewshire Council was due to take place on 31 March. This was postponed to May. The council are not currently offering childminding as an option.

<b>Edinburgh</b>	
<p><b>Currently all provision being delivered through local providers.</b> <i>(SG Trial)</i></p>	<p>Following a very encouraging meeting with SCMA in April a proposal is now underway to set up an approved childminding network for the North West of Edinburgh. The aim is to have this operational from August 2017 and to extend this across the city ensuring childminding is fully integrated into the delivery of ELC.</p>
<b>Falkirk</b>	
<p><b>Falkirk has made some move to work with childminders to deliver ELC as a blended ELC option for two year olds with parents.</b></p>	<p>51 childminders attended an information evening on the 2 November 2016. Following the evening a FAQs leaflet was developed and shared. A pilot area will be identified supporting a small number of childminders to deliver ELC with eligible two year olds. Next meeting is to be confirmed.</p>
<b>Fife</b>	
	<p>Fife Council is currently mapping existing provision, identifying gaps within services. Possible pilot area in rural Fife to be identified. Their current tender runs until 2018 so they advise that no additional services can be commissioned before then. SCMA do run a community childminding service in Fife. This service though is not linked to the delivery of their funded hours so children placed with a childminder will need to move if they subsequently become an eligible two.</p>
<b>Glasgow</b>	
<p><b>Glasgow City Council and SCMA are working together to develop and manage the ELC service for all eligible two year olds.</b> <i>(SG Trial)</i></p>	<p>An SCMA Childminding Development Officer has been employed in Glasgow to develop, monitor and evaluate the ELC service. 25 childminders are now ready to begin delivering ELC with eligible two year olds. The service went live in February. Four children have been placed with three childminders. The Towerview Trial is in the planning stage, which will offer a blended childcare model including childminders. Glasgow has a well-established community childminding service. This is linked so children placed with a community childminder can remain if they subsequently become an eligible two. They report that around fifty percent of community childminding placements are also eligible twos.</p>
<b>Highland</b>	
<p><b>Highland Council work with a few childminders to deliver ELC with eligible two year olds.</b></p>	<p>Currently 15 childminders are actually delivering ELC with eligible two year olds. Following a visit to Thurso, the Council representative was very keen to hear how other authorities were delivering funded ELC with childminders. Unfortunately there has been no expansion to this service.</p>

<b>Inverclyde</b>	
<b>All provision being delivered through local providers, not childminders.</b>	A partner provider ELC information evening took place on 7 March 2017. The area has a very active childminding group who have gone to great lengths to indicate their enthusiasm to the council.
<b>Midlothian</b>	
<b>Are actively working with childminders to deliver alternative flexible methods of delivery along with Quality Improvement support. (SG Trial)</b>	11 childminders are signed up to deliver ELC with eligible two year olds but currently only two childminders are actually delivering it. An information evening took place on 9 February 2016. This provided childminders information on how to become partner providers with Midlothian Council and SCMA an overview of what is happening nationally. SCMA is now actively involved with their SG trial. A new CDO has been appointed and work is underway to link childminding services to the local sure start centres. This looks very promising to develop an integrated model to meet the needs of children and families in the area.
<b>Moray</b>	
<b>Moray Council is working to encourage childminders to deliver ELC with eligible two year olds.</b>	Nine childminders signed up to deliver ELC with eligible two year olds. Childminding ELC information sessions are scheduled took place on 18 February 2017. Moray Council is encouraging more childminders to become partner providers and raise awareness with parents around the flexibility and choice of using childminders. One child is currently placed with a childminder.
<b>North Ayrshire</b>	
<b>Childminders (day carers) are delivering ELC to eligible two's. (SG Trial)</b>	75 childminders signed up to deliver ELC with eligible two year olds and 42 delivering it. North Ayrshire Council actively work with and support childminders (day carers) to deliver ELC with eligible two year olds. Their trial will focus on the Irvine area supporting parents to access employment, training and education. Each family ELC requirements will be tailored to meet their needs.
<b>North Lanarkshire</b>	
<b>Childminders are delivering ELC for eligible two year olds within the area.</b>	93 childminders are partner providers within the council but only six are delivering ELC with eligible two's. Ongoing discussions with Council to support extending the service in 2017.
<b>Orkney</b>	
<b>Childminders have been asked to register their interest to become partner providers for all ages.</b>	Two childminders are now commissioned to deliver ELC with all ages. More childminders are required to further the reach of flexible ELC provision.

<b>Perth &amp; Kinross</b>	
<b>Letter received – all provision being delivered through local providers, not childminders.</b>	The council have confirmed they will meet with us once they have completed their parent survey. No date for this though is yet agreed. The council are not currently offering childminding as an option for parents.
<b>Renfrewshire</b>	
<b>Childminders will be invited to tender to deliver ELC but currently all provision being delivered through other local providers.</b>	Council purchased SCMA CPD Training sessions to be delivered across the region 2016-17. These have been well attended and received. The Council held an ELC information evening on 17 January 2017, sharing their ELC plans and providing information and details around the invitation to become a partner provider with themselves. SCMA met with the council in April. They are beginning to formulate plans for including childminders in their delivery in the future. This is likely to start by using their existing daycarers.
<b>Scottish Borders</b>	
<b>Childminders are actively delivering ELC for eligible two year olds and pilot continues with 2 childminders delivering ELC for three and four year olds.</b>	39 childminders are signed up to deliver ELC with eligible two year olds but currently only nine childminders are actually delivering it. Most recent news looks like the council will cease their pilot to use the two childminders for 3 and 4 year olds. The council is well aware though of the potential of their childminding services and it is hoped that this results in more extended use of these services. The council have a long established supported childminding service. Children can remain with their supported childminder for their funded two year old placement.
<b>Shetland Islands</b>	
<b>Council is keen to meet with SCMA and work with childminders. (SG Trial)</b>	Shetland Council aims to increase the flexibility across their ELC provision, which will now include commissioning services with childminders.
<b>South Ayrshire</b>	
<b>South Ayrshire Council is working with childminders.</b>	Three childminders signed up to deliver ELC with eligible two year olds and three actually delivering it. South Ayrshire Council do not have a 'list' of childminders who they are working with but currently 'spot purchase' places for eligible two year olds. This provides a flexible service to meet the ELC needs of families.

<b>South Lanarkshire</b>	
<b>South Lanarkshire Council is working with a small group of childminders to deliver a SG Trial.</b> <i>(SG Trial)</i>	One childminder signed up to deliver ELC with eligible two year olds and none delivering it. Three information sessions were held in December 2016 and two in January 2017. Support has been given to childminders to complete the Councils application process to become partner providers. The Larkhall Children's Centre will support a blended flexible ELC model of delivery with childminders. Six childminders have signed up to deliver ELC. This will go live mid April 2017. The council do have one childminder who delivers ELC to three and four year olds. This service has been running successfully for many years.
<b>Stirling</b>	
<b>Stirling Council is keen to work with childminders to extend their ELC provision.</b>	Initial discussions with Stirling Council. Next meeting is to be confirmed. SCMA is waiting on a new Project manager to get in touch. The council are looking to run a pilot in Callander but details are yet to be decided.
<b>West Dunbartonshire</b>	
<b>Currently childminders are contracted to deliver ELC to eligible two year olds but not many are partner providers.</b>	Ongoing discussions with West Dunbartonshire Council to identify barriers and challenges preventing childminders from becoming partner providers.
<b>West Lothian</b>	
<b>West Lothian Council is keen to continue their relationship with childminders across the locality.</b>	79 childminders are signed up to deliver ELC with eligible two year olds but currently only eight childminders are actually delivering it. All three and four year old provision will be met through current providers, not childminders. The council has a long established community childminding service run jointly with SCMA. If eligible, it is possible for a child placed with a community childminder to stay when the child turns 2.
<b>Western Isles</b>	
<b>Western Isles will identify an area to support a pilot with childminders</b> <i>(SG Trial)</i>	Ongoing discussions with the Council. Currently the Council's trial will not include childminders.

## 7. PROCUREMENT AND COMMISSIONING

7.1. In February 2017, SCMA asked each Local Authority (LA) to share their processes and procedures on how contractual agreements are being put into place with services to deliver ELC within their locality area. As expected, responses differ so setting a clear picture describing the processes is difficult. These are the findings so far:

- To date, 21 out of the 32 LAs responded to our request.
- LAs do not use the same language around procurement and commissioning of services and there are different interpretations.
- There is a lot of confusion regarding when a LA should use procurement or when they should commission services. Many appear to simply 'spot purchase' when no local authority service is available.
- Most LAs have different 'application' dates when services are able to begin the process to deliver services in partnership.
- Some LAs ask services to register with Public Contract Scotland, then, ask them to go through an application process for them to commission their service.
- Some LAs are in the middle of shifting between commissioning and procuring services.
- Some LAs have the same process for all the services who they wish to contract services from.
- Some LAs have different processes for childminders and other service providers.
- Some LAs have different processes for childminders depending which age group they will be delivering services to.
- Some LAs have support mechanisms in place to support services through whichever application process they are expected to complete.
- This issue has been raised at previous LA network meetings.

7.2. The above is a collective snapshot of the 21 LAs, all using different methods of engaging services to deliver flexible and affordable ELC across Scotland. This may become more of a challenge and a barrier for childminders and other services, who wish to deliver cross boundary ELC between two LAs.

7.3. Some LA contacts are aware of the confusion, but unfortunately they are following guidance from their internal procurement departments. The Scottish Government guidance regarding procurement and commissioning is very detailed.

<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2016/03/7565/2>

## 8. SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT ELC TRIALS

- 8.1. The Scottish Government is providing £1 million of investment to support the delivery of the ELC Trials. On the 22 December 2016, the Minister for Childcare and Early Years announced the second tranche of trials to receive funding. There are now [14 ELC Trials](#), 10 of which include childminding. SCMA are involved in assisting with the delivery of some of these trials.
- 8.2. The trials are spread throughout the country, testing a variety of different delivery models including:
  - Making additional hours available through local childminders as part of a blended approach
  - Linking provision of ELC to local employability services aimed at helping parents to access employment, training or education
  - Co-locating ELC services and out of school care services

## 9. CHILDMINDERS CENTRAL TO CHILDCARE AMBITIONS

- 9.1 In November 2015, First Minister Nicola Sturgeon gave her wholehearted support to the important role of childminders both in providing high quality care and in delivering the funded hours of Early Learning and Childcare. Following the announcement, we will be working with the Care Inspectorate and others on a quality standard for childminding. This will ensure that Induction becomes an expectation prior to registration and that childminding services will have clearer access to qualifications.
- 9.2 The First Minister said: “Childminders do an absolutely crucial job for parents across Scotland, ensuring that their children are properly cared for while they go out and work. Childminders play a vital role in children’s development, which helps to reduce social inequality and close the attainment gap. They will be central to our ambitions for a massive expansion of Early Learning and Childcare in the years to come. That is why, alongside the commitment to increasing the level of entitlement to free Early Learning and Childcare to 1140 hours per year, we will also ensure that the provision which will be offered is of the highest possible quality. These new standards will help drive up quality and ensure parents can rest assured that their children are in the best possible hands. As we expand the hours that children are entitled to, we will also increase the flexibility of the offer. We will ensure that parents can opt to take their available hours of free childcare to better suit their working patterns, with childminders being central to that offer.”
- 9.3 This commitment to childminding has been reinforced by Mark McDonald the Minister for Childcare and Early Years in his statement about the response to the Blueprint consultation.

## 10. COMMUNITY CHILDMINDING

- 10.1 SCMA Community Childminding Service provides support for families at times of difficulty. There have been a range of benefits from the delivery of the service, which Families can be referred to for a variety of reasons.
- 10.2 Children’s well-being is enhanced by spending time away from stressful situations with a responsive adult who can focus on their needs.
- 10.3 Parents also benefit; the childminder is seen as a role model in a non-judgemental environment. They become more able to cope with challenging family circumstances, feel supported at a time of personal ill-health and acquire helpful knowledge of parenting and childcare routines.

- 10.4 The Community Childminding Service benefits children and families through short-term placements, typically lasting eight hours per week over six – 26 weeks. Childminders provide care based on the child's individual needs, helping them develop resilience and achieve crucial milestones. The Getting it Right For Every Child (GIRFEC), wellbeing indicators are used to map achievements and measure success.
- 10.5 Used to its best advantage, a family will be referred to a childminding service and the placement will remain in place even if the child is then eligible for funded hours of ELC. SCMA has examples of **children who are most in need of support being forced to move** childcare setting when they reach two years old if the local authority do not commission ELC with childminders. This appears contrary to the GIRFEC approach.
- 10.6 SCMA is looking to extend their current six Services by highlighting the benefits each child and their family would have from accessing the Service as well as the opportunity to deliver a smooth transition between services by expanding the funded ELC places for eligible 2 year olds.

## 11 OUR EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE CAMPAIGN

- 11.1 SCMA is now doing everything possible to raise awareness that funded childcare is changing. This year we launched an Early Learning and Childcare Campaign, aimed at raising awareness of the forthcoming changes.
- 11.2 Key messages in the campaign include:
- ★ SCMA champions childminders who can offer a blended approach to childcare.
  - ★ Parental choice and flexibility are vitally important to ensuring the best start in life for children.
  - ★ A childminding service is the ideal setting for children to experience their funded hours.
  - ★ The quality of ELC delivered by childminders exceeds other daycare services, including nurseries.
  - ★ 94% of childminding services achieve a grade four or above from the Care Inspectorate.
  - ★ Childminders need to support SCMA to take action help us be your voice.
- 11.3 To support the campaign we set up an ELC microsite ([www.childminding.org/elc](http://www.childminding.org/elc)) targeting both childminders and parents on the forthcoming changes. We have also developed a Parent Leaflet aimed at promoting the benefits of engaging with a childminder to parents and sent this to every member who has signed our Mandate for Change - six copies of the leaflet to distribute to parents and families in their community. A social media campaign has also been created which will run over the next couple of months.

## 12 WE NEED MORE HELP

- 12.1 Our vision is: Quality Childminding.... building confident children within a family childcare experience. SCMA has a duty to its membership to protect professional childminding businesses operating in Scotland. There is much work to be done to realise the increase in the Early Learning and Childcare entitlement to 1140 hours per year by 2020 and we need help.
- 12.2 SCMA feel that improvements to the implementation of the Act could be made by considering the following recommendations.
- ★ Parents, particularly of two year olds, should be encouraged to use childminding as an option

for their 600 hours of funded Early Learning and Childcare.

- ★ Scottish Government and local authorities should run positive promotion of childminding services especially to non-working parents of eligible two year olds. Currently most local authority websites only promote nursery and parent's understanding of childminding services is often limited.
- ★ Local authorities should make clear their plans to deliver the 600 hours and later the 1140 hours. If this does not include the use of childminding services then an explanation as to why that is and an assessment of the impact of moving children already settled with their childminder and an assessment of the impact on those existing childminding services many of whom will inevitably go out of business.
- ★ Parents already using a childminding service should have the right to be able to continue with that service for their funded hours of Early Learning and Childcare with that cost being funded by the local authority.
- ★ Further research should be carried out to determine the impact that childminding has to improve outcomes for children.
- ★ Consultations by local authorities with parents must be meaningful, giving the full range of service options which would include the option to use a childminding service for their funded hours of Early Learning and Childcare.
- ★ Information on local authority websites should be improved so that information about the funded hours of Early Learning and Childcare is really accessible to parents and shows childminding as an option for their children.
- ★ The local section of the Family Information Services website should have a clear section about Early Learning and Childcare that includes the option of using a childminding service.
- ★ Information should be made available from local authorities through the Scottish Government census of all the services they are making available for parents for Early Learning and Childcare.
- ★ A regular audit should be carried out by local authorities to take into account the wider childcare needs of families including the needs of working parents.
- ★ Childminders should be given access to the workforce development funding within local authorities.

## 13 FURTHER INFORMATION

13.1 If you require further information on this report please contact:

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# Early Learning and Childcare



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