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Scottish
Childminding
Association

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SCMA ELC Audit 2021

Parent / Carers Survey

A snapshot survey of 276 parents in 30 local authority areas from 26 August - 24 September 2021, conducted in parallel to a similar snapshot survey of childminders, to complement the SCMA Early Learning and Childcare Audit 2021.



MAIN FINDINGS

- 49.4% of parents who are accessing funded ELC through a childminder and 67.9% of parents not accessing funded ELC through a childminder reported that childminding was not promoted equitably alongside local authority nursery provision as an option to them for receiving their funded ELC entitlement .

49% of parents using a childminder for ELC said it was not promoted equitably alongside other options.

- responses from parents who are accessing funded hours through a childminder, confirm that very few childminders are involved in delivering funded hours to the Scottish Government's priority group of eligible two-year-olds (low-income families); that the vast majority of childminders involved in delivering funded hours to parents are doing so at a lower level and as part of a blended placement, (also involving a nursery), for three- and four year-olds (63.2%).

64% of parents accessing funded ELC with a childminder found the process easy.

- 64.4% of parents who are accessing funded ELC through a childminder found it very easy/easy to do so, as many of these parents had already been accessing childcare from their childminder, and the childminder supported parents through the application process.

However, it is of concern that almost 1 in 4 parents accessing funded ELC through their childminder, reported finding it very difficult/difficult to access through their local authority.

- parents reported significant restrictions within local authority offers as to when funded ELC could be accessed:

→ 28.2% of parents using a childminder and 55.6% of parents not accessing funded ELC through a childminder reported that offers received from local authorities required funded ELC to be accessed on fixed days of the week;

→ 40% of parents using a childminder and 77.8% of parents not accessing funded ELC through a childminder reported that offers received from local authorities required funded ELC to be taken at fixed times;

→ 20.5% of parents using a childminder and 33.3% of parents not accessing funded ELC through a childminder reported that offers received from local authorities included a requirement to take some, or all, of their funded ELC with a local authority nursery;



20% of parents using a childminder were required to take some, or all, of their funded ELC with a local authority nursery.



MAIN FINDINGS

- 56.3% of parents who are accessing funded ELC through a childminder and 73.2% of parents not accessing their funded ELC through a childminder believe local authority offers for funded ELC need to be much more flexible/more flexible. Some concern was expressed about nurseries allocating funded ELC in fixed 10-hour days which resulted in wasted hours, and a reduced ELC entitlement for families, where this did not match the parents' need (i.e. 9.00am – 3.00pm). Conversely, some working parents found fixed 9.00am-3.00pm offers too restrictive;
- more encouragingly, 59.1% of parents accessing funded ELC through a childminder and 74% of parents not accessing their funded ELC through a childminder reported receiving their first choice of preferred provider. However, this needs to be qualified with concern about the lack of choice and options available locally. 60.5% of parents using a childminder and 50.9% of parents not accessing their funded ELC through a childminder only received a single option for accessing their funded ELC within the offer from their local authority. As such, preferences could clearly differ if parents were presented with more options and the ability to make an informed choice. Encouraging satisfaction ratings were

50% of parents not accessing funded ELC with a childminder only received a single option from their local authority.

also reported by parents (higher in those accessing funded ELC through a childminder than in those not accessing their entitlement through a childminder), qualified by parental recognition that this is a free offering.

73% of parents not accessing funded ELC with a childminder believe local authority offers need to be much more flexible.





DETAILED FINDINGS

Parents Accessing Funded Hours in Full or Part Through a Childminder (137 parents in 25 local authority areas)	Parents Accessing Funded Hours Not Through a Childminder (139 parents in 29 local authority areas)
	Please indicate your reasons for not using a childminder (tick all that apply): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I was not aware that childminders were involved in delivering funded hours (12.5%) • I was not given the option to use a childminder for funded hours (30.4%) • There are no childminders delivering funded hours in my area (16.1%) • I prefer not to use a childminder (26.8%) • Other (26.8%)
How long have you been receiving funded hours? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • < 1 year (58.6%) • 1-2 years (36.8%) • 2-3 years (4.6%) 	How long have you been receiving funded hours? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • < 1 year (47.2%) • 1-2 years (39.6%) • 2-3 years (9.4%) • More than 3 years (3.8%)
Do you think your local authority highlighted childminding as an option for receiving your funded hours alongside nursery and other options? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes (39%) • No / had to request it (49.4%) • Don't know (11.5%) 	Do you think your local authority highlighted childminding as an option for receiving your funded hours alongside nursery and other options? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes (25%) • No (67.9%) • Don't know (7.1%)
Please indicate which of the following entitlements you are currently accessing within funded hours from your childminder (please tick all that apply) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eligible 2's hours in full (5.8%) • Eligible 2's blended (1.2%) • Three-Fours hours in full (32.2%) • Three-Fours blended (63.2%) 	
Please indicate which entitlements to funded hours with a childminder you were offered by your local authority <u>Eligible 2's in full</u> Yes (8.9%) No (32.4%) Don't know (1.4%) N/A (57.3%) <u>Eligible 2's blended:</u> Yes (3%) No (34.3%) Don't know (1.5%) N/A (61.2%) <u>Three-Fours in full:</u> Yes (48.6%) No (23%) Don't Know (9.5%) N/A (18.9%) <u>Three-Fours blended:</u> Yes (62%) No (20.3%) Don't know (6.3%) N/A (11.4%)	

<p>How easy or difficult did you find it to be able to access a childminder for your funded hours via your local authority?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very easy (34.5%) • Easy (29.9%) • No opinion (12.6%) • Difficult (14.9%) • Very difficult (8%) <p>Free-text comments indicate it had been easy for those who already had their child with a childminder; conversely some experienced great difficulty.</p>	
<p>Thinking about your current funded hours offer / placement(s) please indicate where any limits were placed on how you could receive your funded hours</p> <p><u>Fixed days of the week</u></p> <p>Yes (28.2%) No (62.4%) Don't know (9.4%)</p> <p><u>Fixed times</u></p> <p>Yes (40%) No (54.1%) Don't know (5.9%)</p> <p><u>Requirement to take some or all hours with a nursery</u></p> <p>Yes (20.5%) No (66.3%) Don't know (13.2%)</p> <p>33 free text comments mostly noting restrictions placed by local authority nursery.</p>	<p>Thinking about your current funded hours offer / placement(s) please indicate where any limits were placed on how you could receive your funded hours</p> <p><u>Fixed days of the week</u></p> <p>Yes (55.6%) No (38.9%) Don't know (5.5%)</p> <p><u>Fixed times</u></p> <p>Yes (77.8%) No (16.7%) Don't know (5.5%)</p> <p><u>Requirement to take some or all hours with a nursery</u></p> <p>Yes (33.3%) No (44.4%) Don't know (22.2%)</p> <p>28 free text comments mostly expressing frustration with just being offered/allocated fixed days and/or times by nurseries which didn't meet parental need.</p>
<p>How much of a match do you believe there is between what you asked for (i.e. with your preferred childcare provider and when you need childcare) with the current ELC offer which you have received from your local authority?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very strong (36%) • Strong (32.6%) • Neither strong nor weak (17.4%) • Weak (8.1%) • Very weak (5.8%) 	<p>How much of a match do you believe there is between what you asked for (i.e. with your preferred childcare provider and when you need childcare) with the current ELC offer which you have received from your local authority?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very strong (21.4%) • Strong (32.1%) • Neither strong nor weak (19.6%) • Weak (25%) • Very weak (1.8%)
<p>How much of a match do you believe there is between what you have been offered by your local authority and what you thought ELC funded hours would provide for parents?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very strong (26.7%) • Strong (24.4%) • Neither strong nor weak (26.7%) • Weak (15.1%) • Very weak (7%) 	<p>How much of a match do you believe there is between what you have been offered by your local authority and what you thought ELC funded hours would provide for parents?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very strong (17.9%) • Strong (25%) • Neither strong nor weak (23.2%) • Weak (26.8%) • Very weak (7.1%)
<p>How many options did you receive within your offer of funded hours from August 2021 from your local authority?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 (60.5%) • 2 (22.2%) • 3 (12.4%) • More than 3 (4.9%) 	<p>How many options did you receive within your offer of funded hours from August 2021 from your local authority?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 (50.9%) • 2 (25.4%) • 3 (14.6%) • More than 3 (9.1%)

<p>If you are receiving full hours with a childminder, was this your</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First choice (59.1%) • Second choice (13.6%) • Third choice (2.3%) • Fourth choice (0%) • Fifth choice (0%) • More than fifth choice (2.3%) • Not my choice (22.7%) 	<p>Please indicate how your current ELC provision offer matched your order of preferences/choices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First choice (74.1%) • Second choice (16.7%) • Third choice (3.7%) • Fourth choice (0%) • Fifth choice (0%) • More than fifth (0%) • None of my choices (5.5%)
<p>If you are receiving hours with a childminder as part of a blended arrangement was this your:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First choice (78.1%) • Second choice (4.1%) • Third choice (0%) • Fourth choice (0%) • Fifth choice (0%) • More than fifth choice (0%) • Not my choice (17.8%) 	
<p>If you are receiving some hours with a nursery as part of a blended arrangement is the nursery your:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First choice of nursery (70.4%) • Second choice of nursery (5.6%) • Third choice of nursery (0%) • Fourth choice of nursery (0%) • Fifth choice of nursery (0%) • More than fifth choice (0%) • Not my choice (23.9%) 	
<p>Thinking about your experiences of accessing funded hours to date, please indicate the extent to which you believe funded hours need to be more or less flexible</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Much more flexible (26.4%) • More flexible (29.9%) • About right / no change / no opinion (40.2%) • Less flexible (1.2%) • Much less flexible (2.3%) 	<p>Thinking about your experiences of accessing funded hours to date, please indicate the extent to which you believe funded hours need to be more or less flexible</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Much more flexible (39.3%) • More flexible (33.9%) • About right / no change / no opinion (26.8%) • Less flexible (0%) • Much less flexible (0%)
<p>What worked well? 36 free text comments generally appreciate of receiving funded childcare, easy to apply and with a number commenting on receiving support from their childminder to guide them through the process.</p>	<p>What worked well? 25 free text comments generally appreciative of funded childcare, easy to apply and with a number commenting on receiving support from nursery staff to guide them through the process.</p>
<p>What didn't work well? 33 free text comments mainly around lack of flexibility and choice, fixed offers exceeding parents' need and some concern about unused hours.</p>	<p>What didn't work well? 29 free text comments mainly around limited options, lack of choice in their area, lack of flexibility to support parents' needs.</p>
<p>Does your current ELC provision meet your family's needs?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes (79.1%) • No (17.4%) • Don't know (3.5%) 	<p>Does your current ELC provision meet your family's needs?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes (64.3%) • No (28.6%) • Don't know (7.1%)
<p>How satisfied are you with your experience of accessing funded hours to date?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very satisfied (38.6%) • Satisfied (44.3%) • No opinion (6.8%) • Dissatisfied (9.1%) • Very dissatisfied (1.1%) 	<p>How satisfied are you with your experience of accessing funded hours to date?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very satisfied (26.8%) • Satisfied (35.7%) • No opinion (17.9%) • Dissatisfied (14.3%) • Very dissatisfied (5.3%)



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