

#TelISCMA

Childminding and You Survey 2022

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#TelISCMA Childminding & You Survey 2022: Survey Report No. 1: Future of Inspection

Overview of our large-scale membership survey capturing data to inform our response to the Scottish Government consultation on the 'Future of Inspection in Early Learning & Childcare and School Age Childcare Services in Scotland'

October 2022

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Executive Summary

CURRENT INSPECTION

The current system of inspection by the Care Inspectorate is not working for childminding.

- only 34% of all childminders who responded believe it has a strong/very strong understanding of childminding;
- only 37% believe it has a strong/very strong focus on childminding; and
- only 38% believe it has a strong/very strong relevancy to childminding.

In parallel, many childminders have found inspections inconsistent and believe they are too focused on funded ELC and documenting practice against it and require to be re-balanced:-

- only 42% believed their own inspections had been consistent or very consistent and 62% believe inspections between childminders are inconsistent or very inconsistent, with 95% of those who believe this reporting this is influenced by inconsistency between different inspectors. As childminders are mainly sole workers, many childminders around Scotland are actively involved in networking and local childminding groups in which professional experiences are shared openly. A number of respondents also found the inspection process to be subjective and opinion-based with different inspectors attaching greater or less value to different aspects of practice.
- the primary driver of the current quality assurance system has been to support the expansion of the statutory entitlement of funded ELC and the delivery of '1140 by 2020', with different statutory organisations requested to develop systems to support this. However, unlike other providers, this forms only part of many childminders' business models. We have previously estimated that only around 27% of children in childminding settings are within the scope of the statutory entitlement (three- and four-year-olds and eligible two-year-olds). The remainder are outwith the scope of funded ELC – babies, one-year-olds, non-eligible two-year-olds and 5-12/16 year-olds (with approximately 50% of children in childminding settings being of school-age). As such, it is not appropriate to inspect and quality-assure childminders' provision of care to this wider age group on the basis of standards, frameworks, and outcomes developed for mainly three-four year olds and on a quality assurance system which is based on a nursery good practice model and doesn't reflect different forms of childcare. There is significant concern that if the Scottish Government and statutory organisations continue with implementing such a uniform model for all forms of childcare this will actively disadvantage childminders who are being inspected against standards which don't reflect their practice model. It is clear that an increasing number of childminders believe they have started to be marked down in inspection for poor recording and paperwork, rather than their practice and without any understanding of the multiple competing demands on their time (see below regarding self-evaluation and paperwork).

Delays in inspection and increasing anxiety:

- 46% of all childminders who responded reported it had been four or more years since their last Care Inspectorate inspection (with 28% reporting it had been more than four years). We appreciate this has largely been outwith the Care Inspectorate's control, as the pandemic was hugely disruptive and they were unable to conduct physical inspections during that time. We further understand that the Care Inspectorate has a large backlog and has been prioritising physical inspections for newly registered childminders or those whose self-evaluation raises any concerns. However, what this survey has shown is that many childminders have not had a physical inspection for some time (with a number noting six or seven years in their free-text comments). When you consider this alongside the significant changes in quality assurance during that time, and the much greater emphasis on paperwork and standards of documentation, many childminders are feeling extremely anxious about their next inspection which could happen at any time, without warning, and are fearful this could result in a downgrading of their service.

More positively, while inspections are supposed to be unannounced, many are not:

- 60% of childminders who responded reported that their inspections had been arranged in advance or had been a mix of announced and unannounced inspections, as inspectors had pragmatically realised that childminders are mostly sole workers, undertake a lot of practice outside and may be out if turning up announced.

- Linked to the above, what came through very strongly in this survey is that childminders' experience of inspection is unlike any other. If the inspection is unannounced, it would be hard to think of any other professional (in another sector or within childcare), who as a sole worker would be expected to accommodate an unplanned inspection, admit a stranger into their setting and home, to have their service officially reviewed (with potential impact on grading, business reputation, ability to deliver funded ELC and income) for up to (in some reported cases) five hours, while they are still professionally responsible for up to six children in their sole care, could be settling in a one year old or caring for an older child with autism, who may find the inspection disturbing, and having to focus and answer questions about their professional practice and provide a range of documentation. It is clear that a number of childminders believe the process shows little respect for childminders and there could be additional benefits in announcing inspections a short period before to allow some preparation while maintaining objective scrutiny.

Fairness of inspections

- It is encouraging that 55% of respondents thought their experience of inspection had been fair, with a further 25% believing it have been very fair. 11% of respondents (n=123) believed their inspections had been unfair or very unfair. Of these, only 39% had asked the Care Inspectorate to review their report and grading, and 61% decided not to ask for a review. When asked what had influenced their decision not to ask for a review, respondents answered as follows (ticking all answers which applied) - 53% believed this could have adversely affected future inspections, reports and ratings; 51% did not believe their concerns would be taken seriously; and 47% believed this would have adversely affected their relationship with their inspector. While this is a small sample of 75 childminders who believed their inspection unfair and didn't ask for a review, within this much larger survey, it does indicate that despite the Care Inspectorate's assertion that any provider can ask for a review of their inspection reports, childminders and other providers may not feel able to request a review and to challenge an inspection report which they believe unfair for fear of adverse consequences due to the balance of power within their relationship with the inspector and the position of authority held by the Care Inspectorate. As such, this finding would benefit from being investigated further on a larger sample in future research - particularly given the data within this survey regarding many childminders' experiences of inconsistency in their own inspections and between childminders' inspections.

CURRENT SELF-EVALUATION & PAPERWORK

Wider impact of earlier failure to deliver a single/shared inspection:

As a result of this not being delivered, childminders now find themselves being inspected by the Care Inspectorate and undertaking up to three forms of self-evaluation with three different statutory organisations (Care Inspectorate, Education Scotland and local authorities' own frameworks) on their singular practice and there has been a significant increase in the number of additional standards and frameworks layered on, requiring to be incorporated into practice and with their own detailed outcomes reporting. This growth in quality assurance has also been accompanied by a significant increase in paperwork and additional training and other requirements all of which collectively have disproportionately affected childminders, as predominantly sole workers, who practice during the day, have to undertake all of this additional work unpaid, in their own time in the evenings and at weekends. In contrast, practitioners in nurseries who face similar requirements, have teams of managers, other practitioners, finance, administrative and quality staff to assist them and get paid to do this during working hours. New findings include –

- **Self-evaluation:** three different models of self-evaluation have been developed to support the expansion of ELC and the delivery of 1140 by 2020 – the Care Inspectorate's Quality Framework, Education Scotland's How Good Is Our ELC and some local authorities have also developed their own local frameworks. The Quality Framework is the main form of self-evaluation used by childminders, as it applies to all childminders (both funded providers and those not involved in delivering funded ELC). Prior to conducting this survey, it was recognised that this is a comprehensive tool, it is an improvement on the Care Inspectorate's previous model of self-evaluation and some childminders have found it useful, although many have also required support to use it. However, looking ahead to what childminders would like to see in the future, we tested these three models of self-evaluation against five fundamental criteria – their ease of use, their relevance to childminding practice, their ease of ability to evidence practice against, their value in supporting reflective practice and in improving practice.

The three forms of self-evaluation achieved higher ratings than the current Care Inspectorate inspections; all provided greater value to partner provider childminders delivering funded ELC than to childminders not involved in funded ELC; with the Quality Framework tracking ahead of How Good Is Our ELC which, in turn, tracked ahead of local authority frameworks; **but all still indicate limited value, understanding, relevance and support for childminding practice if we were to apply the National Standard criteria of ‘Good’ or above for delivering funded ELC to the forms of self-evaluation themselves –**

RATED GOOD or VERY GOOD	Quality Framework		How Good Is Our ELC		Local Authority framework	
	All	Partner Provider	All	Partner Provider	All	Partner Provider
Ease of Use	52%	60%	42%	56%	34%	44%
Relevance to childminding practice	49%	59%	42%	55%	35%	45%
Ease of ability to evidence practice against	46%	56%	41%	53%	33%	45%
Supporting reflective practice	47%	55%	41%	52%	34%	46%
Improving practice	47%	55%	40%	52%	34%	45%

While all childminders are required to self-evaluate against the Quality Framework, the fact that some childminders who are not involved in delivering funded ELC have been accessing How Good is Our ELC and local authority frameworks may be surprising, but not necessarily so given that the primary, if not exclusive, focus of training and communications from statutory organisations is on funded ELC and does not recognise that not all providers are involved in doing so. A number of respondents to our survey also volunteered feeling confused, overwhelmed, not knowing where to start or even if they are completing the right paperwork.

38% of all childminders who responded and 48% of partner provider childminders have found completing these separate forms of self-evaluation duplicative or very duplicative.

It is also of emerging concern that a number of respondents openly admitted they are behind with their self-evaluation, and are aware this could adversely affect their inspection gradings, but have had to delay undertaking self-evaluation due to a combination of having to deal with other paperwork and information requests with tight deadlines and the significant level of time involved in completing three separate self-evaluation exercises. As such, it would be inherently unfair if the wider increase in paperwork (detailed below) is allowed to adversely influence childminders’ inspection gradings and business. Respondents also asked for more support and guidance to enable them to undertake effective self-evaluation.

- **Impact of paperwork:**

- 48% of all childminders (and 66% of partner provider childminders) who responded are now doing an additional 5+ hours of paperwork per week; and 27% of all childminders (and 36% of partner provider childminders) who responded are now doing an additional 7+ hours (a day or more) per week to support this;
- 43% of all childminders (and 53% of partner providers) who responded have already had to or believe they will have to reduce their practice to support this; with 86% of all (and 93% of partner providers) who have had to /will have to do so by 3 or more hours (half a day) per week; and 34% of all (and 42% of partner providers) by 7 or more hours (a day) per week;
- 82% of partner providers who responded reported that delivering funded ELC has resulted in a significant or very significant increase in paperwork. The main examples provided included – local authority

duplication of national quality assurance activity (multiple demands – improvement plans, self-evaluation with information to be recorded and evidenced differently to that captured by the Care Inspectorate and by Education Scotland self-evaluation systems for the same purpose); additional courses and training; recording more detailed observations across an increasing range of frameworks; a significant amount of work required around local authority payment for delivering funded ELC (in arrears, with regular errors, late payment, repeat invoicing etc); Personal Learning Journals for each child (which have become more detailed, linked to different organisations' requirements, can have to be done in own time as with everything on this list and can be very time-consuming to complete); a constant barrage of e-mails, often with short notice requests; and attending regular meetings;

- As a consequence, 53% of partner provider childminders who responded believe it unlikely or very unlikely that they will still be delivering funded ELC in 2-3 years' time if the level of paperwork is not reduced;
- For those not delivering funded ELC, 70% reported that the level of paperwork is a strong or very strong factor in influencing their decision not to deliver funded ELC; and 47% believed they would be more interested in doing so if the level of paperwork reduced, became more proportionate to childminding, lighter-touch and more joined-up.

FUTURE OF INSPECTION

- **Single/shared Inspection and single/shared quality framework for ELC and school-age childcare: format, frequency and by whom –**

- A majority of all childminders who responded (56%) would support a single/shared approach in principle (ranging from 40% of those not involved in delivering funded ELC to 70% of partner providers).
- Very few opposed this (9% of those not involved in funded ELC and 5% of partner providers), with the remainder undecided (37% of all, 51% of those not involved in ELC and 25% of partner providers).

This qualified or hesitant support reflects the recognition that many childminders' experiences are that current inspections are already very long, a significant amount of time is already involved in completing separate self-evaluations and that if the creation of a single/shared inspection and framework resulted in a doubling or even any increase in time it could make matters worse and could not be sustained – in contrast, such a system would need to be simplified and streamlined and based on a much-reduced and rationalised number of accompanying standards, frameworks and outcomes reporting.

- 63% of all childminders who support a single/shared model would favour a more frequent national inspection than the current every four years (which was preferred by only 33%).
- 57% of all childminders who support a single/shared approach would support a national inspection being complemented by self-evaluation between inspections.
- 84% of all childminders who support a national single/shared inspection, believe this should be the only inspection and should remove the need for local authorities to undertake their own self-evaluation activity.
- 88% of all childminders who support a national single/shared inspection believe this should be more childminding-specific recognising the unique nature of childminding and that it spans pre-school and school-age (and including similar aspects to other providers where appropriate), with only 10% favouring a generic system focusing on the same aspects for all childcare providers.
- 90% of all childminders who support a national single/shared inspection believe it should be announced (21% with extended notice and 69% with more limited notice).

- **Single national body with responsibility for overseeing ELC:**
 - 54% of all childminders who support a national single/shared inspection and framework believe this could best be supported by creating a single national body responsible for ELC (ranging from 39% not involved in delivering funded ELC to 67% of partner providers).
 - A minority opposed this (12% of all, 17% of those not involved in funded ELC and 8% of partner providers) and 34% of all were undecided, reflecting the sense that it is unclear if this would improve matters and also that creating a single national body for ELC may not include school-aged childcare – an important point to childminding given that approx. 50% of children in childminding settings are of school-age
 - As such, this came across more as support in principle, subject to working out further detail
- **As may be apparent a number of prominent themes ran through the survey statistics and analysis of 994 free-text responses received on inspection and quality assurance, including particularly –**
 - **Inspection and quality assurance are too nursery-focused and there is a pressing need for a childminding-specific approach.** In seeking to deliver ELC expansion, quality assurance has sought to ensure consistency of quality in receipt of the funded entitlement. However, it has done so by implementing a generic model based on what would be considered good practice in nurseries on an all-provider basis, and the false assumption or understanding that all forms of childcare are the same. They're not. No meaningful thought has been given to starting by understanding different forms of childcare provision and then building up and considering how more setting-specific and relevant inspection and quality assurance could be developed to support the delivery of the funded entitlement within such wider childcare settings. This makes it all the more remarkable that childminders consistently achieve higher ratings across all quality criteria, through independent inspection by the Care Inspectorate, than Daycare of Children's services (local authority and private nurseries combined).
 - **Loss of focus on the child in favour of documentation:** and of most concern that we have lost what should be of the greatest importance to all of us – the focus on the child – through the industry of quality assurance which has built up around ELC expansion and many childminders believe this has gone too far and become an obsession with tick box bureaucracy which puts good documentation ahead of good practice and there is a need to ensure that, in addition to learning, "children feel safe, happy and secure".
- **Further testing of SCMA's evidence-based position that quality assurance must become more joined-up, lighter touch (with fewer frameworks and reduced outcomes reporting) and more proportionate to childminding:**
 - 72% of all childminders who responded agreed or strongly agreed that quality assurance must become more joined-up (ranging from 60% of childminders not involved in funded ELC to 82% of partner providers);
 - 82% of all childminders who responded agreed or strongly agreed that quality assurance must become lighter touch, with fewer frameworks and reduced outcomes reporting (ranging from 76% of those not involved in funded ELC to 88% of partner providers); and
 - 86% of all childminders who responded agreed or strongly agreed that quality assurance must become more proportionate to childminding (ranging from 79% not involved in funded ELC to 94% of partner providers).

#TellSCMA Childminding & You Survey 2022: Future of Inspection

METHODOLOGY, RESPONSE RATE & DEMOGRAPHICS

This large-scale, deep-dive survey was developed to capture SCMA members' experiences on the following:

- the Scottish Government consultation on the Future of Inspection in Early Learning & Childcare and School Age Childcare Services in Scotland;
- current cost pressures (rising cost of living, the Real Living Wage, sustainable rates and the extent to which members' businesses have recovered after COVID-19); and
- members' experiences of being included in delivering ELC, linked to our ELC Audit 2022.

The survey was conducted from 14 September – 9 October 2022. An e-mail invitation was sent out to 2803 members with valid e-mail addresses, followed by social media posts on Facebook and Twitter (including a short 4 mins video), newsletter and magazine items, an advert on our website and a final text reminder.

In total **1263 responses were received (providing a 45% response rate)**. This is a substantive and large sample and increases further on the high response rate (38%) achieved in our earlier and influential #TellSCMA Childminding & You Survey 2020. The survey also captured 1368 free-text comments (994 on the Future of Inspection).

Respondent demographics –

- responses were received from members in **31 local authority areas**;
- **50% of respondents are not involved in funded ELC, 38% are partner providers currently delivering funded ELC**, 4% are in the process of applying or have been approved but are not yet delivering funded ELC, and 8% had previously delivered funded ELC but no longer intend to or have no eligible children in their settings
- the most common maximum registration number was 6 children (77%), followed by 7 children (9%) and 8 children (5%)
- in line with the age profile of the childminding workforce the vast majority of respondents are 40+: 40-44 (16%), 45-49 (17%), 50-54 (20%) and 55+ (33%)
- 18% of respondents had been childminding for < 5 yrs, 19% for 5-10yrs, 19% for 10-15 yrs, 17% for 15-20 yrs and 27% for more than 20 years.

INTRODUCTION

This section of the survey asked 42 questions and was designed to help inform our response to the Scottish Government consultation on the **'Future of Inspection in Early Learning & Childcare and School Age Childcare Services in Scotland'**.

While we appreciated the offer from the ELC Directorate to host a facilitated engagement event for members on the consultation, we chose not to do this as we were involved in the co-delivery of different webinars for members with the Care Inspectorate and Education Scotland at that time, we believed running a further event could reduce attendance across all of these events due to members' increasing commitments and also that undertaking an in-depth survey with members to inform the consultation would be more meaningful. This also meant that we were able to go beyond the scope of the questions asked within the consultation document (general experiences of inspection and quality assurance and preferences for the future) and obtain more in-depth data from members on a wider range of aspects of inspection and quality assurance which we knew from our experience of working with and supporting members, were very important to them and should be reflected in both our response and within the Scottish Government's consideration of the future shape of inspection and quality assurance for childminders. This includes –

- **the consistency of inspection between Care Inspectorate inspectors, as experienced by childminders around Scotland;**
- **whether inspection should be unannounced or announced;**
- **the childminding focus of Care Inspectorate inspection: it's relevance to, focus on and understanding of childminding;**
- **an evaluation of the three separate forms of self-evaluation which childminders, depending on their business model, are required to undertake (the Care Inspectorate's 'Quality Framework', Education Scotland's 'How Good Is Our Early Learning & Childcare' and local authority frameworks) based on - their ease of use, relevance to childminding practice, ease of ability to evidence childminding practice against, supporting reflective practice and improving practice;**
- **the impact of a significant increase in bureaucracy, paperwork and quality assurance under ELC expansion and it's disproportionate effect on childminders as sole workers and, in turn, the implications this has for the delivery of funded ELC, Programme for Government commitments, children and families;**
- **the future shape of inspection and quality assurance which is required for childminding.**

In addition to attracting a high response, 994 free-text comments were captured on current and future inspection and quality assurance. As such, we believe this provides a valuable in-depth independent critique of childminders' experiences of inspection and quality assurance of ELC in Scotland, of what is working and where change is urgently required.

CURRENT INSPECTION

LAST INSPECTION

Q. When were you last inspected by the Care Inspectorate?

	All (n=1218)	Not Involved in ELC (n=603)	Partner Provider (n=465)	Applied/ approved, (n=54)	No longer delivering funded ELC (96)
Within the last year	20%	23%	18%	17%	14%
2 yrs ago	8%	8%	9%	9%	6%
3 yrs ago	20%	20%	21%	28%	23%
4 yrs ago	18%	18%	17%	19%	20%
More than 4 years ago	28%	23%	32%	18%	37%
Newer childminder/not yet inspected	6%	8%	3%	9%	0%

INSPECTIONS: UNANNOUNCED OR ANNOUNCED

Q. Inspections from the Care Inspectorate are currently supposed to be unannounced. In practice, has your experience of inspections been that they are -

	All (n=1128)	Not Involved in ELC (n=538)	Partner Provider (n=446)	Applied/ approved (n=49)	No longer delivering funded ELC (n=95)
All unannounced	39%	34%	44%	41%	39%
All arranged in advance (i.e. inspector recognises that as a sole worker I could be out with children when they were planning to inspect)	23%	25%	21%	14%	31%
A mix of unannounced and announced	38%	41%	35%	45%	30%

CONSISTENCY OF INSPECTIONS

Q. How consistent do you believe your Care Inspectorate inspections have been?

	All (n=1137)	Not Involved in ELC (n=546)	Partner Provider (446)	Applied/ approved (n=49)	No longer delivering funded ELC (n=96)
Very consistent	11%	13%	11%	8%	8%
Consistent	31%	28%	33%	39%	29%
No opinion	18%	22%	14%	14%	16%
Inconsistent	20%	17%	21%	22%	29%
Very inconsistent	7%	7%	8%	8%	7%
Not had enough to compare	13%	13%	13%	8%	11%

Q. As you answered 'consistent' or 'very consistent' has this been influenced by (tick all that apply) -

	All (n=479)	Not Involved in ELC (n=224)	Partner Provider (n=195)	Applied/ approved (n=24)	No longer delivering funded ELC (n= 36)
Consistency of same inspector	47%	47%	46%	46%	44%
Consistency between different inspectors	54%	53%	54%	58%	56%

Q.

As you answered 'inconsistent' or 'very inconsistent' has been influenced by (tick all that apply) -

	All (n=308)	Not Involved in ELC (n=131)	Partner Provider (n=127)	Applied/ approved (n= 15)	No longer delivering funded ELC (n=35)
Inconsistency of same inspector	7%	8%	7%	7%	6%
Inconsistency between different inspectors	95%	93%	97%	100%	100%

Q. What is your perception of the consistency of experiences of Care Inspectorate inspection between childminders (i.e. do you think inspections experienced by childminders vary)?

	All (n=1110)	Not Involved in ELC (n=527)	Partner Provider (n=442)	Applied/ approved (n=47)	No longer delivering funded ELC (n=94)
Very consistent	3%	3%	3%	2%	1%
Consistent	14%	16%	15%	13%	9%
No opinions	21%	27%	16%	15%	14%
Inconsistent	40%	36%	42%	45%	45%
Very inconsistent	22%	18%	24%	25%	31%

FAIRNESS OF INSPECTIONS

Q. How fair do you believe Care Inspectorate inspections and reports have been regarding your practice?

	All (n=1112)	Not Involved in ELC (n=528)	Partner Providers (n=442)	Applied/ approved (n=48)	No longer delivering funded ELC (n=94)
Very fair	25%	23%	28%	17%	26%
Fair	55%	56%	54%	60%	53%
No opinion	9%	9%	8%	13%	8%
Unfair	10%	10%	9%	10%	12%
Very unfair	1%	2%	1%	0%	1%

Q. As you answered 'unfair' or 'very unfair' have you ever asked the Care Inspectorate to review your inspection report and grading?

	All (n=123)	Not Involved in ELC (n=60)	Partner Providers (n=46)	Applied/ approved (n=5)	No longer delivering funded ELC (n=12)
Yes	39%	30%	43%	40%	67%
No	61%	70%	57%	60%	33%

- **Q. As you answered 'yes' please indicate which statement best describes the outcome**

	All (n=46)	Not Involved in ELC (n=17)	Partner Providers (n=19)	Applied/ approved (n=2)	No longer delivering funded ELC (n=8)
My concerns were upheld and my grading was improved	13%	12%	16%	0%	13%
My concerns were partially or fully upheld, but my grading was not changed	35%	41%	37%	0%	25%
My concerns were not upheld and my grading was not changed	52%	47%	47%	100%	62%
My concerns were not upheld and my grading went down as a result of re-examination	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

- **Q. As you answered 'no' please indicate which of the following statements influenced your decision not to officially question your report (please tick all that apply) –**

	All (n=72)	Not Involved in ELC (n=42)	Partner Provider (n=23)	Applied/ approved (n=3)	No longer delivering funded ELC (n=4)
I was concerned that this could result in my grade being lowered further	25%	24%	26%	0%	50%
I believed this would have adversely affected my relationship with the inspector(s)	47%	50%	44%	33%	50%
I believed this could have adversely affected future inspections, reports, ratings	53%	50%	65%	0%	50%
I believed there was a blockage with an individual inspector and my word would not be accepted against the inspector's or that this would be addressed by the Care Inspectorate	18%	17%	26%	0%	0%
I did not believe my concerns would be taken seriously	51%	45%	48%	100%	100%

CHILDMINDING FOCUS OF INSPECTION(S):

Q. Please indicate how strong you believe the current Care Inspectorate inspections are in terms of relevancy to, focus on and understanding of childminding –

Relevancy to childminding

	All (n=1034)	Not Involved in ELC (n=485)	Partner Providers (n=417)	Applied/ approved (n=46)	No longer delivering funded ELC (n=86)
Very strong	6%	6%	7%	9%	2%
Strong	32%	27%	37%	20%	35%
Neither strong nor weak	43%	47%	40%	52%	36%
Weak	17%	19%	14%	17%	22%
Very weak	2%	1%	2%	2%	5%

Focus on childminding

	All (n=1033)	Not Involved in ELC (n=484)	Partner Providers (n=415)	Applied/ Approved (n=45)	No longer delivering funded ELC (n=86)
Very strong	6%	6%	7%	9%	4%
Strong	31%	29%	35%	18%	31%
Neither strong nor weak	42%	43%	40%	55%	37%
Weak	18%	20%	16%	11%	22%
Very weak	3%	2%	2%	7%	6%

Understanding of childminding

	All (n=1031)	Not Involved in ELC (n=484)	Partner Providers (n=417)	Applied/ Approved (n=45)	No longer delivering funded ELC (n=85)
Very strong	7%	6%	7%	7%	5%
Strong	27%	25%	31%	18%	27%
Neither strong nor weak	39%	41%	37%	53%	33%
Weak	22%	23%	20%	20%	26%
Very weak	5%	5%	4%	2%	9%

INSPECTIONS: POSITIVITY OF EXPERIENCE

Q. In general terms, how positive or negative has your overall experience of Care Inspectorate inspections been?

	All (n=1048)	Not Involved in ELC (n=491)	Partner Providers (n=424)	Applied/ Approved (n=46)	No longer delivering funded ELC (n=87)
Mostly positive	23%	20%	26%	15%	20%
Positive	44%	43%	47%	39%	42%
Neither positive or negative	24%	27%	19%	39%	22%
Negative	8%	8%	6%	7%	15%
Mostly negative	1%	1%	2%	0%	1%

INSPECTIONS: ANY OTHER COMMENTS

Q. Do you have any other comments? Please use this space to make any other comments about your experience of the current Care Inspectorate inspection system (n=380)

Please note that many respondents commented on multiple issues within their responses, so the numbers below are higher than that of the number of comments received.

The main themes within the free-text comments were (in numerical order):

- **Focus on paperwork instead of the child (95 comments):** Inspectors are too paper-focused (and less on the child), paperwork associated with inspection is excessive and unsustainable for sole workers, increasing concern that childminders are being graded and marked down on their lowest point (ability to keep up with paperwork) when practice is high, dreading next inspection.
- **Inconsistencies between inspections personally experienced by childminders (69 comments):** Inspectors change regularly, little continuity between inspectors and inspections, considerable variation between inspectors and inspections, good reports with previous inspector/lower with new inspector, grade depends on the inspector, different inspectors tell you different things (contradictory), only focus on negative, too opinion-based, depends on different things inspectors like or value – paperwork, space, resources, activities etc ... where are the checks?
- **Inconsistency of inspection experience between childminders (42 comments):** childminders as sole workers have well-developed professional networks, share experiences and inspections are very inconsistent between childminders (different asks and requirements from inspectors, with different priorities and interests)
- **Inspections are too nursery-focused and do not have an understanding of childminding (40 comments)** – inspectors with little understanding of childminding applying a nursery-based inspection model, don't recognise parents want home-based environment, can't make direct comparisons in all areas
- **Inspections should be announced (35 comments):** all inspections should be announced, unannounced nature causes serious anxiety, childminders as sole workers could be out, inspection

feels invasive as the childminding setting is also their home – can feel very intimidating to have a stranger come into your home, conduct an official inspection without warning and criticise your practice or facilities, requiring you to prioritise the inspector’s needs and look out paperwork for up to 4 or 5 hours while you are in sole care of children, may be settling in a 1 year old, caring for a child with autism and this can be disruptive and unsettling for children, inspector and childminder would get more out of inspections if pre-arranged.

- **Inconsistency in frequency of inspections (28 comments):** a number of childminders reported not having been inspected for 4 – 7 years, inspections too far apart, the lengthy period since last inspection creating more anxiety as so much has changed (particularly paperwork requirements linked to new Quality Framework. A further 17 comments were received explicitly around anxiety caused by the new Quality Framework.
- **Lack of clarity regarding what is required in practice to support inspection (21):** more transparency regarding inspection process required, would improve consistency, support a more and consistent inspection.
- **Lower number of comments (<20 per theme) were made about –**
 - Inspectors were supportive and understanding;
 - Inspections are too long (examples included two days a few at 5 hours);
 - Inspection for a few hours once every 4 years is not an accurate reflection of practice throughout that 4 year period;
 - Inspection disproportionate to level of practice i.e. just before and after school, or one child just a few hours per week – same requirements as if at full capacity;
 - Little help or support from inspectors outwith and between inspections;
 - Mismatch between inspection and report, with inspectors unwilling to discuss reports;
 - Shouldn’t have to complete learning journals for school age children / paperwork inappropriate for older children who have been in their care since young and are now much older;
 - Negative experience of last inspection causing childminders to consider giving up childminding.

CURRENT QUALITY ASSURANCE

QUALITY FRAMEWORK

Q. Please complete the following tables if you have undertaken self-evaluation against the Care Inspectorate's Quality Framework, and rate each aspect (please tick all that apply) -

EASE OF USE

	ALL (n=684)	Not Involved in ELC (n=294)	Partner Provider (n=296)	Applied/ Approved (n=31)	No longer delivering funded ELC (n=63)
Very good	8%	7%	9%	10%	6%
Good	44%	33%	51%	51%	51%
No opinion	35%	45%	29%	29%	25%
Poor	11%	13%	9%	10%	13%
Very poor	2%	2%	2%	0%	5%

RELEVANCE TO MY CHILDMINDING PRACTICE

	ALL (n=683)	Not Involved in ELC (n=292)	Partner Provider (n=297)	Applied/ Approved (n=31)	No longer delivering funded ELC (n=63)
Very good	9%	9%	10%	6%	2%
Good	40%	29%	49%	52%	48%
No opinion	34%	43%	27%	26%	30%
Poor	15%	17%	13%	16%	19%
Very poor	2%	2%	1%	0%	1%

EASE OF ABILITY TO EVIDENCE MY PRACTICE AGAINST

	ALL (n=685)	Not Involved in ELC (n=292)	Partner Provider (n=299)	Applied/ Approved (n=31)	No longer delivering funded ELC (n=63)
Very good	7%	7%	8%	10%	3%
Good	39%	27%	48%	45%	46%
No opinion	35%	43%	28%	26%	34%
Poor	17%	20%	14%	19%	14%
Very poor	2%	3%	2%	0%	3%

SUPPORTING REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

	ALL (n=683)	Not Involved in ELC (n=293)	Partner Provider (n=296)	Applied/ Approved (n=31)	No longer delivering funded ELC (n=63)
Very good	8%	7%	8%	6%	3%
Good	39%	29%	47%	52%	44%
No opinion	38%	45%	34%	26%	32%
Poor	13%	17%	9%	16%	18%
Very poor	2%	2%	2%	0%	3%

IMPROVING MY PRACTICE

	ALL (n=682)	Not Involved in ELC (n=293)	Partner Provider (n=296)	Applied/ Approved (n=31)	No longer delivering funded ELC (n=62)
Very good	8%	6%	9%	13%	3%
Good	39%	30%	46%	52%	39%
No opinion	39%	48%	33%	22%	40%
Poor	12%	14%	10%	13%	13%
Very poor	2%	2%	2%	0%	5%

HOW GOOD IS OUR EARLY LEARNING & CHILDCARE (HGIOELC):

Q. Please complete the following tables if you have undertaken self-evaluation against Education Scotland's HGIOELC and rate each aspect (please tick all that apply):

EASE OF USE

	ALL (n=505)	Not Involved in ELC (n=177)	Partner Provider (n=255)	Applied/ Approved (n=24)	No longer delivering funded ELC (n=49)
Very good	7%	5%	10%	4%	2%
Good	35%	19%	46%	33%	38%
No opinion	46%	67%	32%	63%	37%
Poor	10%	8%	10%	0%	20%
Very poor	2%	1%	2%	0%	2%

RELEVANCE TO MY CHILDMINDING PRACTICE

	ALL (n=506)	Not Involved in ELC (n=178)	Partner Provider (n=255)	Applied/ Approved (n=24)	No longer delivering funded ELC (n=49)
Very good	7%	6%	9%	8%	2%
Good	35%	19%	46%	29%	39%
No opinion	44%	64%	30%	58%	41%
Poor	12%	10%	13%	5%	14%
Very poor	2%	1%	2%	0%	4%

EASE OF ABILITY TO EVIDENCE MY PRACTICE AGAINST

	ALL (n=508)	Not Involved in ELC (n=178)	Partner Provider (n=257)	Applied/ Approved (n=24)	No longer delivering funded ELC (n=49)
Very good	7%	6%	7%	4%	4%
Good	34%	17%	46%	29%	37%
No opinion	45%	64%	31%	59%	43%
Poor	12%	12%	13%	8%	12%
Very poor	2%	1%	3%	0%	4%

SUPPORTING REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

	ALL (n=507)	Not Involved in ELC (n=177)	Partner Provider (n=257)	Applied/ Approved (n=24)	No longer delivering funded ELC (n=49)
Very good	8%	7%	10%	8%	2%
Good	33%	17%	42%	29%	39%
No opinion	45%	64%	31%	54%	45%
Poor	12%	11%	14%	9%	10%
Very poor	2%	1%	3%	0%	4%

IMPROVING MY PRACTICE

	ALL (n=507)	Not Involved in ELC (n=178)	Partner Provider (n=256)	Applied/ Approved (n=24)	No longer delivering funded ELC (n=49)
Very good	8%	7%	9%	8%	2%
Good	32%	17%	43%	29%	39%
No opinion	47%	64%	35%	59%	49%
Poor	10%	12%	10%	0%	6%
Very poor	2%	0%	3%	4%	4%

LOCAL AUTHORITY'S OWN FRAMEWORK/SYSTEM:

Q. Please complete the following tables if you have undertaken self-evaluation against your local authority's own framework and rate each aspect (please tick all that apply):

EASE OF USE

	ALL (n=485)	Not Involved in ELC (n=158)	Partner Provider (n=259)	Applied/ Approved (n=22)	No longer delivering funded ELC (n=46)
Very good	6%	6%	7%	5%	2%
Good	28%	11%	37%	36%	30%
No opinion	49%	77%	34%	55%	35%
Poor	14%	5%	18%	4%	26%
Very poor	3%	1%	4%	0%	7%

RELEVANCE TO MY CHILDMINDING PRACTICE

	ALL (n=483)	Not Involved in ELC (n=157)	Partner Provider (n=259)	Applied/ Approved (n=21)	No longer delivering funded ELC (n=46)
Very good	7%	7%	7%	5%	4%
Good	28%	10%	38%	43%	26%
No opinion	48%	78%	33%	47%	35%
Poor	14%	4%	18%	5%	26%
Very poor	3%	1%	4%	0%	9%

EASE OF ABILITY TO EVIDENCE MY PRACTICE AGAINST

	ALL (n=483)	Not Involved in ELC (n=158)	Partner Provider (n=257)	Applied/ Approved (n=22)	No longer delivering funded ELC (n=46)
Very good	6%	6%	7%	5%	2%
Good	27%	9%	38%	32%	26%
No opinion	50%	78%	34%	54%	39%
Poor	14%	6%	17%	9%	26%
Very poor	3%	1%	4%	0%	7%

SUPPORTING REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

	ALL (n=484)	Not Involved in ELC (n=158)	Partner Provider (n=258)	Applied/ Approved (n=22)	No longer delivering funded ELC (n=46)
Very good	6%	6%	7%	5%	2%
Good	28%	8%	39%	36%	28%
No opinion	52%	78%	37%	50%	43%
Poor	11%	6%	13%	9%	20%
Very poor	3%	1%	4%	0%	7%

IMPROVING MY PRACTICE

	ALL (n=483)	Not Involved in ELC (n=158)	Partner Provider (n=257)	Applied/ Approved (n=22)	No longer delivering funded ELC (n=46)
Very good	6%	6%	7%	9%	2%
Good	28%	9%	38%	32%	30%
No opinion	51%	77%	37%	50%	41%
Poor	12%	6%	15%	9%	20%
Very poor	3%	2%	3%	0%	7%

DUPLICATION

Q. If you have undertaken (or are currently undertaking) more than one form of self-evaluation, how duplicative do you believe it is?

	ALL (n=568)	Not Involved in ELC (n=203)	Partner Provider (n=284)	Applied/ Approved (n=25)	No longer delivering funded ELC (n=56)
Not duplicative at all	2%	5%	1%	0%	2%
A little duplicative	17%	14%	19%	20%	14%
No opinion	43%	63%	32%	28%	32%
Duplicative	21%	12%	27%	32%	22%
Very duplicative	17%	6%	21	20%	30%

IMPACT OF PAPERWORK DURING ELC EXPANSION

Q. Please indicate how many hours you undertake every week on paperwork and non-direct practice areas? (this could include quality assurance; recording children’s development and outcomes progress; responding to local authority or others’ requests for information and data returns; keeping up-to-date with changes to national policy, guidance and frameworks and updating your policies; undertaking Continuing Professional Learning/training; reflective practice; studying; business/finance; marketing your business; updating parents etc.)

	ALL (n=843)	Not Involved in ELC (n=376)	Partner Provider (n=352)	Applied/ Approved (n=38)	No longer delivering funded ELC (n=77)
1-2 hours	22%	35%	10%	18%	16%
3-4 hours	30%	32%	24%	45%	36%
5-6 hours	21%	16%	30%	16%	13%
7-8 hours	14%	11%	18%	13%	16%
9-10 hours	5%	3%	6%	5%	5%
More than 10 hours	8%	3%	12%	3%	14%

Q. Have you had to, or do you believe you will have to, reduce your hours of practicing childminding to enable you to do this paperwork?

	ALL (n=862)	Not Involved in ELC (n=395)	Partner Provider (n=352)	Applied/ Approved (n=38)	No longer delivering funded ELC (n=77)
Yes	43%	33%	53%	34%	51%
No	32%	41%	22%	47%	31%
Don’t know	25%	26%	25%	19%	18%

Q. As you answered ‘yes’ to the previous question – please indicate how much you have had to, or believe you will have to, reduce your weekly practice by to enable you to respond to the increase in paperwork:

	ALL (n=375)	Not Involved in ELC (n=134)	Partner Provider (n=187)	Applied/ Approved (n=14)	No longer delivering funded ELC (n=40)
1-2 hours pw	14%	25%	7%	21%	7%
3-4 hours pw	28%	32%	25%	22%	28%
5-6 hours pw	24%	22%	26%	7%	25%
7 or more hours pw	34%	21%	42%	50%	40%

Q. Do you currently deliver funded ELC? (n=884)

Yes	42%
No	58%

Q. As you answered ‘yes’, please indicate how much delivering funded ELC has increased or decreased your paperwork? (n=359)

Significant decrease	0%
Decrease	1%
No change	17%
Increase	41%
Significant increase	41%

Q. Please provide examples and details of the level of ELC-related paperwork that has increased for you (n=210)

Please note that many respondents commented on multiple issues within their responses, so the numbers below are much higher than that of the number of comments received.

The main themes within the free-text comments were (in numerical order):

- **Local authority duplication of quality assurance (and activity) (90 comments):** this also includes 39 comments about local authority annual Self Improvement Plans, often with tight deadlines, duplicating CI Quality Framework, more detailed than CI, started as one document now separate versions required for parents and children; visits/inspections, duplication of what has already been inspected by CI i.e. CI and local authority both wanted a sleep policy and had different requirement, CI happy with paperwork during inspection and 3 weeks later local authority ELC Officer visited advising of things to alter/improve; paperwork (including duplicating information provided to CI, but so it is in their format and on their documentation);
- **Additional courses and training (55 comments):** ensuring up to date in all including local authority mandated training, regular 3 hr evening training sessions and an example of additional 30hrs of training for local Quality Improvement Plan alone, webinars;

- **Recording more detailed observations (53 comments):** lots more required, CI Quality Framework, GIRFEC, SHANARRI, CfE, NHCS, Realising the Ambition;
- **Local authority payment (51 comments):** keeping spreadsheets/timesheets to claim back ELC hours; Scottish Milk and Healthy Snack Scheme – recording and claiming back in arrears for a full term (not straightforward); invoicing and e-mailing local authority finance teams, poor local authority finance systems, delays in payment (i.e. wait 7 weeks of an 8 week term for fees), payment errors – repeated following-up, local authority staff often ask for some information twice;
- **Ongoing national and local self-evaluation (48 comments):** CI (Quality Framework), ES (HGIOELC) and Local Authority;
- **Other recording and planning (38 comments):** maths and literacy trackers, care plans (more in-depth), activity plans, filling floor books with evidence , next steps, ELC development milestone reports, sleep records (more detailed);
- **Personal Learning Journals (32 comments):** including updating, taking and printing off photos and coding, very time consuming;
- **Responding to e-mails (31 comments):** mostly local authority, quite often at short notice
- **More meetings (29 comments):** some mandatory, ELC forums, provider meetings, network meetings, monthly meetings with Early Years support teachers, often duplicating info information already provided by CI and SCMA
- **Lower numbers of comments (<20 per theme) were made about –**
 - Filling in forms generally (not financial)
 - Undertaking and SVQ or HNC (over 2 years)
 - Local authority contracts and related paperwork
 - More reading and research
 - Additional policies, regular updating of policies and procedures
 - Excessive paperwork to become a funded provider

Q. If the current level of paperwork was NOT to reduce, how likely do you think it is that you will still be delivering funded ELC in 2-3 years' time? (n=356)

Very likely	9%
Likely	24%
No opinion	14%
Unlikely	27%
Very likely	26%

Q. As you answered 'no', how much of a factor is the level of paperwork associated with funded ELC influencing your not delivering funded ELC? (n=481)

Very weak factor	4%
Weak factor	5%
No opinion	21%
Strong factor	25%
Very strong factor	45%

Q. As you answered ‘no’, if the paperwork and bureaucracy for funded ELC reduced and became more proportionate to childminding, lighter-touch and joined-up would you be more interested in participating in ELC delivery? (n=493)

Yes	47%
No	24%
Don’t know	29%

ANY OTHER COMMENTS

Q. Do you have any other comments to make about your experiences of current self-evaluation? (n=273)

Please note that many respondents commented on multiple issues within their responses, so the numbers below are much higher than that of the number of comments received.

The main themes within the free-text comments were (in numerical order):

- Self-evaluation (70 comments):** recognised as having value, but is tick-box; self-evaluation needs to be clearer/improved; not sure where to start or when I should be self-evaluating; no clear guidance on what to do; advised to write it in inspection language; difficult to evidence/makes by service look lower on paper than it is/benefits those who can put their practice into writing/ I believe I self-evaluate my practice naturally as I go, but find it difficult to put into writing; recent training on self-evaluation has been helpful and we need more of this online; no consistency between Care Inspectorate and local authority; no consistency between local authorities; self-evaluation is subjective and open to interpretation and inspectors have to be consistent in acting on it; needs to be standardised/single system with standardised paperwork and templates which works for all governing bodies urgently needed – different organisations involved expect it in different ways, repetitive, duplicative; local authorities see themselves as the guarantors of quality and ignore the Care Inspectorate; confusing, stressful, time-consuming/took 11 hrs out of a weekend/another example of 25 hrs; daunting particularly when doing it for the first time; self-evaluation more difficult for childminders as sole workers who do not have immediate peer support to discuss; many childminders are not able to not up-to-date with self-evaluation due to other paperwork demands / studying an SVQ/ not enough time to give to it/disadvantages childminders as nursery based and nurseries have more support/ultimately could adversely affect gradings (which could affect ability to deliver funded ELC)/a number of respondents believe we are already starting to see this around the country with childminders being down-graded on paperwork and their recordings rather than their actual practice;
- Paperwork (67 comments):** swamped by paperwork in own time; unpaid; long day,, takes me away from own children in the evenings/weekends; I don’t enjoy childminding any more; level of paperwork has become unbearable/ unsustainable/overwhelming/stressful/making me anxious/needs to stop; we need to be paid for time to do paperwork and studying; paperwork becoming less relevant; I can only do the paperwork as I have Assistants to support practice;
- Loss of focus on child (43 comments):** We’ve lost the emphasis on importance of making the child safe, happy and secure; children in our settings are thriving, developing confident and parents are happy; too much focus on paperwork over practice, parents aren’t looking / don’t want this level of paperwork and detail from childminders; parents happy with WhatsApp updates or daily diaries – aren’t looking for floor books, PLJs etc; paperwork/recording for under 3 year olds is excessive; too nursery-focussed / local examples all nursery-based; constantly compared to nurseries / holiday model must take 6 weeks unpaid to match LA nursery closure period when only

wanting to take 4 weeks it has got too impersonal almost like factory production line of a childcare system;

- **Have decided to or are considering giving up childminding due to the paperwork (20 comments):** unsustainable level of paperwork; fear of being graded badly for not doing the paperwork; believe more will give up

- **Smaller numbers of comments (<20 per theme) were made about –**
 - Having to do all of the paperwork for few or no children in setting
 - Not involved in delivering funded ELC as put- off from delivering ELC due to paperwork
 - Little support from local authority
 - Already had to reduce my practice hours to do paperwork
 - Funded places are at not at a sustainable / high enough rate
 - No alternative but to keep delivering ELC as my business would not be sustainable without it
 - Concerned that going into partnership would require change to business-model
 - Don't have time to undertake an SVQ due to paperwork
 - Council is very supportive
 - Approaching retirement so am not considering ELC

THE FUTURE OF INSPECTION

SINGLE/SHARED INSPECTION & SINGLE/SHARED QUALITY ASSURANCE

Q. Do you believe there should be a single/shared inspection at a national level (covering both childcare and learning aspects of delivery and based in an accompanying single/shared framework?)

	All (n=848)	Not Involved in ELC (n=399)	Partner Provider (n=340)	Applied/ Approved (n=38)	No longer delivering funded ELC (n=71)
Yes	56%	40%	70%	63%	72%
No	7%	9%	5%	8%	6%
Don't know	37%	51%	25%	29%	22%

Q. As you answered 'yes' – how frequently do you believe this national single/shared inspection should be conducted?

	All (n=469)	Not Involved in ELC (n=161)	Partner Provider (n=231)	Applied/ Approved (n=25)	No longer delivering funded ELC (n=52)
Every years	7%	9%	6%	20%	0%
Every 2 years	24%	21%	25%	36%	23%
Every 3 years	32%	31%	33%	32%	33%
Every 4 years	33%	36%	31%	8%	42%
Less frequently than every 4 years	4%	3%	5%	4%	2%

Q. As you answered 'yes', do you believe that there should be regular self-evaluation conducted between inspections at a national level as part of this national process?

	All (n=468)	Not Involved in ELC (n=161)	Partner Provider (n=231)	Applied/ Approved (n=25)	No longer delivering funded ELC (n=51)
Yes	57%	55%	58%	60%	61%
No	22%	27%	19%	20%	20%
Don't know	21%	18%	23%	20%	19%

Q. As you answered 'yes', do you believe a national single/shared inspection should be the only inspection and should remove the need for local authorities to undertake their own self-evaluation activity?

	All (n=464)	Not Involved in ELC (n=160)	Partner Provider (n=228)	Applied/ Approved (n=25)	No longer delivering funded ELC (n=51)
Yes	84%	81%	86%	80%	92%
No	6%	7%	5%	4%	4%
Don't know	10%	12%	9%	16%	4%

Q. As you answered ‘yes’, do you believe the single/shared inspection for childminders should be:

	All (n=470)	Not Involved in ELC (n=162)	Partner Provider (n=231)	Applied/ Approved (n=25)	No longer delivering funded ELC (n=52)
Generic and focusing on the same aspects for all childcare providers	10%	11%	11%	16%	2%
More childminding-specific, recognising the unique nature of childminding and that it spans pre-school and school-age (and including similar aspects to other providers where appropriate)	88%	87%	87%	80%	98%
Don't know	2%	2%	2%	4%	0%

Q. As you answered ‘yes’, do you believe the future single/shared inspections should be:

	All (n=470)	Not Involved in ELC (n=162)	Partner Provider (231)	Applied/ Approved (n=25)	No longer delivering funded ELC (n=52)
Unannounced	10%	9%	11%	4%	14%
Arranged in advance with limited notice	69%	64%	69%	84%	71%
Arranged in advance with more extended notice	21%	27%	20%	12%	15%

Q. As you answered ‘no’, please indicate all of the statements which have influenced your answer:

	All (n=60)	Not Involved in ELC (n=38)	Partner Provider (n=15)	Applied/ Approved (n=3)	No longer delivering funded ELC (n=4)
I am happy with the Care Inspectorate inspection system	42%	34%	53%	67%	50%
I am concerned that education would take priority over childcare within the inspection and framework	63%	63%	60%	67%	75%
I am concerned that the single/shared inspection would be based on a nursery model as opposed to recognising the nature of childminding	70%	76%	60%	33%	75%
I believe this could make the inspection too long, extensive and disproportionate for childminders as mainly sole workers	77%	74%	73%	100%	100%
Other	10%	10%	13%	0%	0%

Survey analysis note: please note that survey logic had unfortunately not been applied to enable ‘don’t know’ respondents (n=315) to answer the above questions. While this may have increased the number of responses to each question, we believe (from our wider analysis of this survey and practical experience of working with childminders around Scotland) that this would not have changed the results and that a numerical increase in responses would have been consistent with the answers provided.

THE NEED FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE TO BECOME MORE JOINED-UP, LIGHTER-TOUCH & MORE PROPORTIONATE TO CHILDMINDING

Q. Considering the current level of quality assurance and the future shape of quality assurance please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements:

Quality assurance must become more joined-up:

	All (n=808)	Not Involved in ELC (n=381)	Partner Provider (n=319)	Applied/ Approved (n=39)	No longer delivering funded ELC (n=69)
Strongly agree	28%	18%	36%	36%	45%
Agree	44%	42%	46%	44%	38%
No opinion / neither agree or disagree	26%	37%	17%	18%	14%
Disagree	2%	3%	1%	2%	3%
Strongly disagree	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Quality assurance must become lighter-touch, with fewer frameworks and reduced outcomes reporting:

	All (n=806)	Not Involved in ELC (n=380)	Partner Provider (n=319)	Applied/ Approved (n=39)	No longer delivering funded ELC (n=68)
Strongly agree	39%	34%	42%	51%	52%
Agree	43%	42%	46%	31%	35%
No opinion / neither agree or disagree	17%	23%	12%	13%	10%
Disagree	1%	1%	0%	5%	3%
Strongly disagree	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Quality assurance must become more proportionate to childminding:

	All (n=806)	Not Involved in ELC (n=379)	Partner Provider (320)	Applied/ Approved (n=39)	No longer delivering funded ELC (n=68)
Strongly agree	53%	45%	61%	56%	63%
Agree	33%	34%	33%	31%	28%
No opinion / neither agree or disagree	13%	20%	6%	10%	9%
Disagree	1%	1%	0%	3%	0%
Strongly disagree	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

A SINGLE NATIONAL BODY/ORGANISATION FOR ELC

Q. Currently the Scottish Government is consulting on the possibility of a single/shared inspection linked to a single/shared framework, but is not currently planning to have a single organisation responsible for doing this. Instead, it is anticipated that the Care Inspectorate would continue to have responsibility for childcare quality assurance and the new body taking on the education inspection function from Education Scotland (who currently inspect nurseries and also developed the How Good is our ELC self-evaluation framework for all providers) will have responsibility for learning quality assurance within ELC. As noted earlier, the Scottish Government previously charged the Care Inspectorate and Education Scotland with developing a single/shared inspection and this was not delivered. Please indicate if you believe the Scottish Government should combine responsibility for Early Learning & Childcare into a single national body/organisation?

	All (n=809)	Not Involved in ELC (n=383)	Partner Provider (n=318)	Applied/ Approved (n=39)	No longer delivering funded ELC (n=69)
Yes	54%	39%	67%	74%	64%
No	12%	17%	8%	8%	11%
Don't know	34%	44%	25%	18%	25%

ANY OTHER COMMENTS

Q. Do you have any other comments which you would like to make about the future shape of inspection and quality assurance (n=131):

Please note that many respondents commented on multiple issues within their responses, so the numbers below are much higher than that of the number of comments received.

The main themes within the free-text comments were (in numerical order):

- **Need for more focus on the child and quality of care rather than paperwork/too much duplication/major reform required/one short, simple, shared framework required (45 comments):** if the childrens' needs are being met through GIRFEC we don't need other frameworks; moved from nursery into childminding to spend more time with children; one short, simple, shared framework required; clear guidance on what is required; excessive paperwork detracting from our ability to practice and support children; far too many frameworks (local authority expects us to be familiar with 19 documents, excluding courses and ongoing paperwork); local authority duplicates my self-assessment against the Quality Framework with their self-assessment against the Quality Framework, HGIOELC and Realising the Ambition; is Scottish Government aware of what local authorities are doing and requiring?; too much chopping and changing; speak to parents – they are not asking for much that is produced / greater emphasis should be placed on parent feedback than paperwork; single app should be developed to support it; create a single/shared online file for each setting which all of the bodies could access instead of duplicating work and recording;
- **Nurseries and childminding are different and require their own specific inspections by those who understand this (25 comments);** childminding is unique and this needs to be recognised and valued; those inspecting need to understand childminding and that, while we follow

the same frameworks, is different to nurseries; inspections should be in keeping with the type of setting, not measured against different settings; childminding-specific framework inspected by childminding-specific inspectors;

- **Inspections need be re-balanced (too focused on 2-4s and learning / childminding is 0-12) and more supportive (16 comments):** inspection should be more supportive, reviewing practice, and providing encouragement; current inspections are less about support and more about scrutiny; current inspection focuses more on learning than childcare – need to be re-balanced; greater emphasis on play required in CI inspection and Quality Framework; current inspection and self-evaluation too focused on funded ELC and 2-4s, doesn't reflect and isn't relevant to younger children (i.e. 12-14 months) – outside, loose parts etc; risk of applying ELC learning aspects of inspection and quality assurance to school age childcare - children will have undergone formal learning at school and after school should not be learning-focussed so can't be judged on same basis and could adversely affect grading; frameworks need to more child-based and appropriate for age; separate under 3 and 3-5 inspections;
- **Single body (15 comments):** single body preferred (5 preferred the CI); add an educational element to CI inspection / two inspectors delivering a shared inspection would be excessive; single inspection would free up resources between CI and Education Scotland to do more inspections, do drop-in sessions and provide support between inspection. However, 3 outwith this group thought this may not be essential if a single/shared inspection could be produced;
- **Too much paperwork (15 comments):** paperwork is out of control; paperwork caused me to leave ELC and now childminding/planning to leave childminding; much less paperwork required; no emphasis on relationship between childminder and child; been marked down in inspection on paperwork;
- **Need for consistency of inspections (15 comments):** need for clear expectations; inspections need to be more consistent, less personal bias, consistency of frequency; standard templates; childminders should be asked to grade their inspector on how the inspection was carried out to improve consistency; transparency re what you need to do to achieve each grade and inspected consistently;
- **Current CI inspection disadvantages childminders as sole workers / need to be announced (9 comments):** childminders can't be in sole charge of up to 6 children for a long inspection and source paperwork and give the inspection and inspector the focus required; very stressful; provide even 24 hrs' notice of inspection to prepare children for a stranger (to avoid unsettling them) and to find and prepare our paperwork; let us know in advance what paperwork is required rather than asking during inspection when caring for children - if paperwork available at start inspector could check then spend time observing engagement with children; possibly split the inspection – short unannounced one with children for observation and the other announced for paperwork, training etc;
- **Other (9 comments)**

In Childminders' Own Words: snapshot of the 994 comments received

About current inspection (and its focus):

"I find that it is not geared towards childminding at all. The system is really focused on nurseries"

"I feel we are being compared exactly with nursery provision and we are expected to do the same amount of paperwork but in our own time in the evenings and weekends..... this is not sustainable"

"Our clients want a home from home experience for their children to be loved and play. Inspections are in my opinion geared to structured nurseries"

"More emphasis on paperwork than my actual caring for children"

"My inspector was very nice but, in my opinion, compared me to an ELC setting with lots of staff or a nearby childminder with 4 assistants: completely out of touch with what the majority of us do as lone worker childminders"

"It has always felt very intimidating when a stranger comes in to judge you in your own home, the process is stressful and I feel like too much is expected from childminders"

About the current consistency of inspection:

"I find the inconsistencies from inspectors is so unprofessional. What one person thinks is good the next Inspector may not like. It is very opinion based in my experience with a lot of mixed messages"

"Lack of consistency with inspectors. Currently on my third inspector in 5 years. No relationship if need support"

"No two inspectors ask for the same thing. Some are looking for policies that others say are not required. Some want floor books, some don't. Some look at funded paperwork, some don't. It's so unfair"

"Different inspectors, different opinions"

"I am regularly in touch with the other childminders in my area and every inspector looks for different things"

"The requirements from one inspector to the next vary massively"

"Some inspectors care about the children, others about the paperwork"

"There needs to be clear understanding of what paperwork is required"

"A standard inspection would be good. Currently it is very dependent on the inspector and what their interest is, how they feel on the day"

About the current frequency of inspection and unannounced inspection:

"Childminders should not fear inspections, but we do. We are educated in our profession, but still inspectors come to our homes and disregard this, as they have little understanding of our profession"

"Unannounced inspections give me serious anxiety"

"I endured a 5 hour long unannounced inspection – far too long for such an intense interview style inspection while also having to meet the needs of 3 young children"

"I have not been inspected for nearly 7 years, meaning although I am working to current self-evaluation frameworks I have not had the benefit of CI feedback as yet. I am awaiting an inspection every day, but they never arrive. This is becoming quite unsettling. I feel it is unfair that I have had to wait such a long time while others receive multiple inspections. I recognise this is a reflection of my high grades, low CI risk assessment and zero complaints against my service, but feel inspections should be every 2 or 3 years to reassure providers they are properly on track"

About the current level of paperwork:

"I spend at least 1-2 days a week doing paperwork and am now reducing my working week to allow me to get all the paperwork done, as I can't keep up – meaning I can't offer full-time places anymore"

"It makes me ill thinking about all the paperwork"

“The paperwork is excessive and getting more each year”

“The answer to everything seems to be to produce another ‘framework’ usually a document that is far too long, complex and written by someone who clearly does not understand that childminding is about looking after the children not filling in paperwork of little relevance”

“Too much emphasis on paperwork, not enough on relationships with the children”

“It’s enough!”

“The paperwork ... is overwhelming. Actually soul destroying”.

“It all needs stopped”

“There is far too much paperwork. The only downside of the job”.

“Constant duplication of e-mails, duplicate evidence of practice, duplicate contracts, duplication of everything that has already been inspected by CI”

“I spend several evenings a week and weekends catching up on paperwork, attending CPD courses or training sessions which is all unpaid and taking time away from my own family. I do not get ‘time off the floor’ to do this work or training as practitioners do in a nursery setting. Parents have little understanding – they think I start work when they drop their child off and finish when they pick up. I have parents wanting me to extend my hours – this is not possible if I’m to keep up with the work involved”.

“Very disillusioned and I have been childminding for 17 years”

“To be honest I’m not sure what paperwork we’re supposed to be doing”.

About self-evaluation:

“I agree with and support the principle of self-evaluation, but find it hugely time consuming, massively increasing paperwork and study time on top of a week which is exhausting and has very long hours”.

“I am yet to embark on the quality framework and self-evaluation. I spend an hour and a half after cleaning each night updating parents, completing feedback and attending training”

“I have briefly read the frameworks, but not in a position to do much with them as I am studying my SVQ3 which is taking up my time along with my weekly paperwork”

About the Future of Inspection:

“Childminding is completely different from a nursery setting and should be inspected that way”

“Keep it relevant, focused on the unique aspects of childminding compared to other forms of childcare, and professionals having an understanding of our job and the value of our role in the care of children and support offered to families within our service. It’s not all about ticking boxes”

“Focus on supporting childminders to be the best they can be. Work with childminders to develop reporting templates so they accurately highlight what we do and how we do it. Get standard templates so we know what is expected and are inspected fairly by all inspectors, working from the same expectations. Give childminders the opportunity to send info across instead of putting them on the spot while they’re trying to work”.

“We need reformation”.

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