

scma<sup>®</sup>

Scottish  
Childminding  
Association

*committed to quality childcare*

# Early Learning and Childcare

Childminding services offer  
quality, flexibility, accessibility  
and affordability

Making a  
Difference

The story so far of our journey towards 2020 and the  
expansion of funded Early Learning and Childcare.



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# Scotland's Early Learning and Childcare Expansion

**W**elcome to this special Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) update which details our story so far of our journey towards 2020 and the expansion of ELC. We are now all aware that ELC is changing in Scotland and thought it was the right time to look at where this journey started, what has happened so far and what we would like to achieve by 2020. We have mapped the journey so far in this magazine and you have my promise that SCMA will continue to work on behalf of its membership to campaign for childminding to be offered as a high-quality option for funded ELC in Scotland.

To recap, this journey started in the Summer of 2015 when the Scottish Government published an Independent Review of the Scottish ELC Workforce and Out of School Care Workforce. The review made key recommendations and in November 2015, the Scottish Government then announced its intention to expand the provision of funded ELC from 600 hours to 1140 hours per year by 2020 for all three and four-year-olds and for two-year-olds whose parents/carers are on qualifying benefits. At this time the First Minister stated that: ***"Childminders play a vital role in children's development, helping to reduce social inequality and close the attainment gap. They will be central to our ambitions for a massive expansion of ELC in the years to come."***

Historically, as a workforce, childminders have assisted in closing the attainment gap - helping to reduce the link between deprivation and poor educational attainment in Scotland. We know and understand that intervening early in the lives of young children can have a positive influence on their lives as they live and grow and that 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 funded places can contribute towards other ELC commitments and support parents to work, train or study. What we also know and understand is that a childminding service is the ideal setting for children to experience their funded



hours – allowing one-to-one attention and the chance to learn, play and grow with other children.

What SCMA has tried to do in relation to the expansion of funded ELC, from the very outset, is ensure that childminding is offered as a high-quality option for parents when choosing their childcare. We have engaged with the Scottish Government, initiated a national campaign and written to every local authority in Scotland to raise awareness of childminding and ask that childminders are included in expansion plans so that they are paid for providing their ELC services. Although this is starting to happen, there is still much work to be done.

SCMA strongly believe that parental choice and flexibility are vitally important to ensuring the best start in life for children and that childminders help to make Scotland the best place in the world to grow up, giving children the best possible start in life. There is still a long road ahead to 2020 and the 'Funding Follows the Child' commitment of the Scottish Government. Much still needs to be done to protect professional childminding services but by continuing to work together we will make a difference to ELC in Scotland.

**Maggie Simpson**  
Chief Executive, SCMA





# 2015 Where it all began...

## SUMMER 2015

### INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF THE SCOTTISH EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE WORKFORCE AND OUT OF SCHOOL CARE WORKFORCE

On 1 June 2015 The Scottish Government published an Independent Review of the Scottish Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) Workforce and Out of School Care Workforce.

The review made three key recommendations of importance to childminding. They were:

1. Consider making induction or pre-registration training a requirement for registration to provide a childminding service under the Public Services Reform Act.
2. Include childminders on the same register with the same conditions as the majority of the ELC workforce, particularly for Community Childminders; those commissioned to deliver the funded hours of ELC; and those providing specialist high-quality services and invest in and build upon these services.

3. Commission further evaluation and research to consider the impact of Out of School Care and also childminding on children's outcomes in Scotland. In addition, further research considering the impact of ELC and Out of School Care for children from disadvantage and/or with additional learning needs in Scotland would be beneficial.

SCMA worked with Professor Siraj on the review and our Chief Executive, Maggie Simpson welcomed its publication stating: "SCMA welcomes the government's on-going commitment to make Scotland 'the best place to grow up'. This review has confirmed what we knew all along - that ELC is a valuable profession and should be treated with the respect it deserves. This review has also recognised childminding as a vital arm of that profession. We look forward to working with the government to help ensure childminders are well-equipped to deliver the highest quality early learning and childcare to our children."

# AUTUMN 2015

## FIRST MINISTER ANNOUNCES PLANS FOR A NEW STANDARD OF BEST PRACTICE

**“Childminders play a vital role in children’s development and are central to childcare ambitions.”**

First Minister



In November 2015 the First Minister announced plans for a new standard of best practice for childminders. Meeting with Maggie Simpson, Chief Executive of SCMA and Karen Reid, CEO of the Care Inspectorate, the First Minister announced that the standard will include a training and induction programme that all new childminders would be expected to complete prior to registration.

“Childminders play a vital role in children’s development,” said the First Minister. “Helping 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.”



“Alongside the commitment to increasing the level of entitlement to funded 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 funded 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 funded childcare to better suit their working patterns, with childminders being central to that offer.”

Commenting on the announcement our Chief Executive, Maggie Simpson, said: “I’m delighted to hear of another piece being added to the jigsaw. The development of a quality standard for childminders will bring childminding in line with the opportunities that are already enjoyed by the rest of the early years workforce. There is already a robust registration and inspection process carried out by the Care Inspectorate with childminding services amongst the highest graded early learning and childcare providers.

“SCMA and our childminder members also want to see more direct access to qualifications and I look forward to working with the Care Inspectorate, Scottish Government and the Scottish Social Services Council on the development of this quality standard for childminders.”

# WINTER 2015

## EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE: a guide for childminders

SCMA publish a guide for childminders on Early Learning and Childcare (ELC). The guide contained key information on the expansion of funded ELC and what action could be taken by childminders. It highlighted that whether or not childminders are commissioned to provide funded ELC is purely a decision for their local authority.

We gathered information on the use of childminders to deliver funded ELC across the 32 local authority areas in Scotland and it was evident that childminders were not seriously being considered by their local authorities as partner providers for the delivery of funded ELC. The report was presented to the Scottish Government.



A young child with light hair, wearing a blue hoodie with white stripes on the sleeves, is the central focus. They are looking slightly to the left. In the background, several adults and other children are blurred, suggesting a group setting like a nursery or community center.

# 2016

## SPRING 2016

### CHILDMINDERS LOSING OUT ON EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE

In Spring 2016 SCMA published hard evidence in our *Childminding* magazine that local authorities were not engaging with childminders. We were worried about the detrimental effect this would have on childminding services in Scotland.

Not only would this potentially lead to the closure of childminding services, but it also denied parents the choice of flexible childcare they were entitled to, as stated by the First Minister and in the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act.

## SUMMER 2016

### REVIEW OF EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE EXPANSION

The Care Inspectorate published a national review of the expansion of funded Early Learning and Childcare to 600 hours for all three and four-year olds and eligible two-year olds.

The review found that the choice of ELC provision available to parents varied depending on location with some areas lacking flexibility of choice for some families. It suggested that local authorities could support better access for parents by applying more flexibility around the length of sessions and commissioning a range of different services.

The review also revealed that childminders, private nurseries and playgroups could be considered as placements for children, especially two-year olds and that there was a need for a complex ELC system to be strategically managed and co-ordinated as a whole at a national as well as local authority level.

The Care Inspectorate welcomed the decision of the Scottish Government to establish an ELC Strategic Forum and Evidence Group, with key stakeholders including SCMA being actively involved.

## AUTUMN 2016

### 70% OF OUR MEMBERS SIGN OUR MANDATE FOR CHANGE

SCMA wrote to all our members in the autumn of 2016 to ask them to sign our Mandate for Change so we could lobby on their behalf. Some local authorities seemed to be telling us that childminders were not interested in partnering with them to provide funded Early Learning and Childcare. "Not true" we said but in order to support our statement we asked our members to sign our Mandate for Change that simply stated that we could lobby for childminders to become partner providers within local authority areas. Almost 70% of our membership responded with a signed mandate, authorising SCMA to act on their behalf with their local authority to ensure that childminding is actively encouraged and promoted within their area as a high quality option for the delivery of funded ELC.



## WINTER 2016

### WE WROTE TO EVERY CHIEF EXECUTIVE IN SCOTLAND

SCMA Chief Executive, Maggie Simpson, wrote to the Chief Executive of every local authority to lobby for change and requested a meeting to ensure that childminding remained a viable option for parents in 2020. The letter outlined how we might work together in the future to ensure that:

1. Parents, particularly of eligible two-year olds, are given childminding as an option for their funded hours of ELC within their local authority area. Childminding is not just for working parents.
2. Parents already using a childminding service should have the right to be able to continue with that service for their funded hours of ELC with that cost funded by the local authority.
3. A blended ELC model is developed with part of the day with the childminder and part with nursery.
4. Together we work to protect the professional childminding businesses operating in your local authority area and if required we work to expand services to meet demands.

**We work together to protect professional childminding services in Scotland.**



# 2017

## SPRING 2017

### SCMA LAUNCH NATIONAL CAMPAIGN TO PROTECT PROFESSIONAL CHILDMINDING SERVICES IN SCOTLAND

To support our membership and ensure that childminding remains a viable option for the future delivery of ELC, SCMA launched a national campaign to “Protect Professional Childminding Services” in Scotland. The campaign, which is still running, is aimed at ensuring that:

1. Parents, particularly of eligible two-year olds, are given childminding as an option for their funded hours of ELC within their local authority area. Childminding is not just for working parents.
2. Parents already using a childminding service have the right to be able to continue with that service for their funded hours of ELC with that cost funded by the local authority.
3. As the funded hours are increased to 1140 by 2020, it is important that a blended ELC model is developed with part of the day with the childminder and part with nursery.
4. Professional childminding businesses operating in each local authority area are protected and if required work is commenced to expand services to meet demands.

#### PARENTS JOIN THE CAMPAIGN TO HELP PROTECT CHILDMINDING

As part of our ELC campaign, SCMA developed a Parent Leaflet aimed at promoting the benefits of engaging with a childminder. Following the theme of “childminding develops a child’s mind”, the leaflet promoted the fact that childminders are professional childcare workers, providing an essential childcare service for children and their families. Working from their own homes, childminders offer a unique, flexible approach – looking after small groups of children in a family setting.

## SUMMER 2017

### PROTECTING PROFESSIONAL CHILDMINDING IN SCOTLAND

In May 2017 we took the voices of childminders to the Scottish Parliament in recognition of the services they provide. We were delighted that Fulton MacGregor MSP sponsored a Parliamentary Reception, aptly named Protecting Professional Childminding in Scotland.



There was an agreement at the reception that we need to continue to work to improve the recognition of childminders nationwide and within the ELC workforce so that they continue to be recognised more widely as a vital and valuable part of the ELC workforce and their professional services are protected for the future. At the reception the Minister for Childcare and Early Years said: “Childminders already play an incredibly important role in supporting families and nurturing our young people. As we begin to deliver the expanded ELC entitlement childminders will only become more essential, especially for younger children.

“Completely transforming the childcare landscape in Scotland is a huge challenge but one that will ultimately benefit the nation for generations to come. I look forward to continuing to engage with SCMA and the sector at events like this as we work together to ensure Scotland is the best place in the world to grow up.”



# AUTUMN 2017

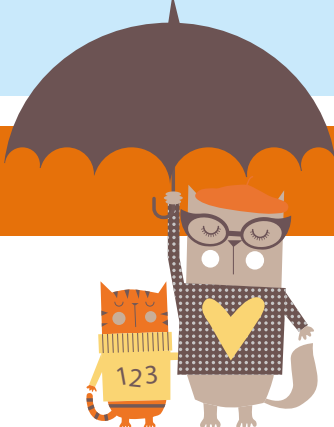
## LOCAL AUTHORITIES NOT OFFERING CHILDMINDING AS AN OPTION FOR PARENTS

During the Autumn of 2017 we continued to drive forward our national campaign to protect childminding in Scotland. One of the latest developments to ensure that childminding remained on the political agenda was the publishing of an Open Letter to the Scottish Government on the plight of childminders in Scotland.

Commenting on this Open Letter, Maggie Simpson, Chief Executive of SCMA said: "I have been voicing my concerns over the future of childminding in Scotland during the past year. Over two years ago SCMA was commissioned by the Scottish Government to produce a national report on the current state of childminding services in Scotland to deliver funded ELC. At the time, this report made for grim reading and I am sad to say that not much has changed since then. Now nearly 70% of our members have signed our Mandate for Change, asking SCMA to lobby on their behalf to protect their future. Most local authorities are just not offering childminding as an option for parents, even for their two-year olds.

The Open Letter to the Minister for Childcare and Early Years asked the Scottish Government to confirm that: *Professional childminding businesses operating in each local authority area must be given due consideration in ELC expansion plans and in on-going service developments to ensure that parents, who wish to do so, can access a childminding service for part or all of their funded entitlement when Funding Follows the Child is introduced in 2020.*

To support the Open Letter and give voice to those supporting childminders, we launched our national pledge online at [childminding.org/pledge](http://childminding.org/pledge). It asked as many families, organisations, supporters and friends as possible to go online and make a pledge so that together we can do our utmost to protect our quality and professional childminding workforce that builds confident children within a family childcare experience.



# WINTER 2017

## SAVE OUR SERVICES #SOSChildminding

To support the Open Letter sent to the Scottish Government and give voice to those supporting childminders, SCMA launched our national pledge to Protect Childminding Services in Scotland. Save Our Services: **#SOSChildminding** followed the success of our Mandate for Change and aimed to further boost our Early Learning and Childcare campaign and gather the voices of parents, childminders and other key supporters.

98% of childminders are still not commissioned to deliver funded Early Learning and Childcare (ELC). This is a worrying trend, and as a result we appear to be losing a vital workforce, alongside the quality services you provide to children and their families.



**OVER 80 ORGANISATIONS ACROSS SCOTLAND HAVE ALSO PLEDGED THEIR SUPPORT.**

**ALMOST 2,000 PEOPLE HAVE PLEDGED THEIR SUPPORT FOR FUNDED CHILDCARE WITH A CHILDMINDER AND TO PROTECT CHILDMINDING IN SCOTLAND.**

**Save Our Services #SOSChildminding**  
**MAKE a pledge to save childminding in Scotland**

**Have you signed the pledge yet?**

**[childminding.org](http://childminding.org)**



# 2018

## SPRING 2018

### QUALITY STANDARD FOR EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE

The Blueprint for 2020 Action Plan from the Scottish Government described a new service model that would be introduced by 2020 as part of the expansion to 1140 hours of funded Early Learning and Childcare (ELC), alongside the 'Funding Follows the Child' approach.

A national quality standard or quality criteria will apply to all services delivering funded ELC, to ensure families across Scotland can expect a consistent, high-quality, approach to ELC provision, reflecting national policy priorities.

The 'Funding Follows the Child' approach will also enable families to access funded ELC from the provider of their choice, providing they meet the criteria of the national standard.

SCMA is actively involved in the development of the National Quality Standard for ELC providers, ensuring that the criteria is open, consistent and proportionate for childminders.

Maggie Simpson, Chief Executive of SCMA said: "We want to make sure the quality criteria that make up the National Standard are things that childminding services are already achieving or can work towards as we get closer to 2020. We know the quality of care childminders provide is graded the same or – in many cases – better than all other care services, and this high-quality, flexible care must be recognised. However, the criteria must be proportionate and realistic, and it must not change the nature of childminding."







**“This Work Based Award will help ensure that more childminders are recognised professionally for the high-quality service they provide.”**

**SUMMER 2018**

## **SCMA ACHIEVES SQA APPROVED CENTRE STATUS AND LAUNCHES NEW WORK BASED AWARD**

### *Six steps form one giant leap towards an accredited qualification*

We were delighted and very proud to achieve our new status as an official SQA Approved Centre, enabling us to offer learning opportunities specific to childminding and the chance for childminders to work towards a recognised formal qualification. The first qualification we launched was the Complete Childminding Learning Pathway – a Work Based Award, which is accredited by SQA at Level 7 of the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework and recognises the unique form of childcare provided by childminders.

Commenting on this achievement, Dr Janet Brown, SQA Chief Executive, said: “This new Work Based Award will give childminders the opportunity to be recognised for the skills and knowledge they developed throughout their careers. The new qualification will also help to raise the profile of childminders and the vital role they play within Scotland’s early learning and childcare landscape.”

The Minister for Childcare and Early Years, Maree Todd, added: “I’m very pleased to welcome the launch of this Work Based Award for childminders. We are committed to making Scotland the best place to grow up, with every

child given the best chance to succeed and fulfil their potential, and childminders have a key role in that.

“They support many children and families across Scotland and will also play an important part in the delivery of the expanded funded Early Learning and Childcare provision in the years to come. This Work Based Award will help ensure that more childminders are recognised professionally for the high-quality service they provide.”

James Dornan MSP, and Convener on the Scottish Parliament’s Education and Skills Committee attended the official launch of the new qualification at SQA Offices Glasgow and said: “It is well known that education is the *defining mission* of our government. Lifelong learning is a huge part of this and the launch of the Complete Childminding Learning Pathway is now ensuring that childminders have a recognised route that very much supports the unique form of childcare which they provide.

“It is excellent news that childminders taking part in the Award will gain accreditation of their prior learning and, of course, it will be the children in their care who will be the main beneficiaries. The whole focus is on the needs of children and I welcome this Work Based Award within the ELC sector.”





# NEXT STEPS



# What can you do next?

We now need your help to continue to build this campaign at a local level. Here are **Five Steps** that you can do to help support the ELC Campaign.

## 1 FIND OUT WHAT'S HAPPENING IN YOUR AREA

We are already in contact with local authorities, but it is also really important that they hear from you too. If your local authority contracts with childminders get in touch with them to ask how you join. It maybe they issue a tender for the ELC each year and they have eligibility criteria your service must meet. We have created a letter template on our website that you can easily download and then write to them. Or you can telephone and ask to speak to the person within the Education Service responsible for the funded hours. Perhaps they will send someone out to talk to your childminding group.

We have also created a letter template on our website for you to send to your local councillor. It simply asks for your local councillor's support in raising awareness of childminding services in their local authority area.

If you want their help in protecting your services, login to the Membership Dashboard at **childminding.org**, download the letter, fill it in and post it.

## 2 ASK YOUR PARENTS WHAT THEY WANT

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

## 3 MARKET YOUR CHILDMINDING SERVICE

Childminding is not easily visible to families looking for childcare. Potential customers may be unaware of your service and what it can offer. Survival can depend on your ability to market your service and how you communicate and build relations with your customers will undoubtedly impact on your sustainability. Three simple things you can do to actively market your service include:

1. Make sure your childminder profile on the Childminder Search Service is live and updated on our website at **childminding.org**. We actively promote this service on the web through Google Advertising so that parents can find your service.
2. Keep highlighting your Care Inspectorate grading. In the Early Learning and Childcare Statistics published by the Care Inspectorate, childminders score the highest of all daycare of children services so the key message to shout out is that *childminders deliver high quality services, developing a child's mind and building confidence within a family childcare experience.*
3. Word of mouth recommendations from satisfied customers is one of the best methods of raising awareness and marketing your services. Start talking to everyone who will listen about the benefits of using a childminder.

## 4 KNOW YOUR HEALTH VISITOR

Health Visitors have, and always have had, a significant public health role to play in relation to individuals, families and communities by providing critical support to all children under five years of age. They provide advice and support to thousands of families to help give children the best possible start in life. Ensuring parents are exploring all options for ELC funding is a key part of their role so try to ensure that your local Health Visitor is aware of your professional childminding service, so it can be included in their offering to parents.

## 5 LET US KNOW WHAT IS HAPPENING IN YOUR AREA

SCMA will support any childminder who is willing to approach their local authority to question why they will not contract with childminders to deliver ELC. Email us at **information@childminding.org** with 'Early Learning and Childcare' in the title of your email.

## What is SCMA doing next?

Once again SCMA has contacted every local authority in Scotland to obtain information on the current state of childminding services in Scotland. We have used the data collected to draw together a national picture of childminding services currently delivering funded ELC, and we've detailed some of this information on our map of Scotland overleaf.

We will now take this report to the Scottish Government, and share with MSPs and local authorities to further our campaign to protect professional childminding services in Scotland.

Together we will make a difference.

# Current State of Childminding Services in Scotland

## Western Isles

27 childminders. 11 are partner providers who have not yet been commissioned to deliver services.

## Stirling

110 childminders. 39 are partner providers commissioned to deliver services to three children.

## West

**Dunbartonshire**  
45 childminders. None are partner providers.

Na h-Eileanan Siar  
(Western Isles)

## East Dunbartonshire

134 childminders. 11 are partner providers who have not yet been commissioned to deliver services.

## Inverclyde

58 childminders. Ten are partner providers commissioned to deliver services to six children.

## Renfrewshire

90 childminders. None are partner providers.

## Argyll & Bute

75 childminders. 24 are partner providers commissioned to deliver services to five children.

## Highland

275 childminders. Eight are partner providers commissioned to deliver services to nine children.

## Orkney

30 childminders. Three are partner providers who have not yet been commissioned to deliver services.

## Shetland Islands

15 childminders. Two are partner providers commissioned to deliver services to three children.

## Moray

117 childminders. 18 are partner providers commissioned to deliver services to five children.

## Aberdeenshire

349 childminders. 22 are partner providers commissioned to deliver services to two children.

## Aberdeen City

165 childminders. 32 are partner providers commissioned to deliver services to ten children.

## Angus

158 childminders. 27 are partner providers commissioned to deliver services to one child.

## Perth & Kinross

167 childminders. None are partner providers.







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We acknowledge the support of the Scottish Government  
through a CYPFEIF and ALEC Fund Grant.

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