

**Glasgow City Council****Education, Skills and Early Years City Policy Committee****Report by Executive Director of Education Services****Contact: Heather Douglas Ext: 74493****EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE - WRAPAROUND CHILDCARE****Purpose of Report:**

To update Committee on delivery of wraparound early learning and childcare for children aged 0 – 12 years old.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that Committee notes the progress and issues around developing wraparound childcare services and asks the Executive Director to continue to bring update reports as required.

Ward No(s):

Citywide: ✓

Local member(s) advised: Yes ☐ No ✓consulted: Yes ☐ No ✓**PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING:**

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1. EARLY LEARNING & CHILDCARE – 0-5 YEARS

- 1.1 Glasgow City Council delivered its planned expansion of universal access to 1140 hours of statutory early learning and childcare (ELC) per year for all 3 and 4 year olds and some 2 year olds in August 2021. There is no entitlement to funded nursery provision for children under 2 years old and parents are responsible for meeting the costs.

Childcare hours beyond the statutory entitlement are known as wraparound childcare and as with care for children under 2 years, are paid for by the parent.

- 1.2 Glasgow is both the largest deliverer and commissioner of ELC in Scotland. On an annual basis over 15,000 children attend either a Council nursery or one of our Funded Provider settings for their statutory ELC provision. An estimated further 2,500 children under 3 years old access places within the Funded Provider settings, however, we do not hold data in relation to these places as we do not commission them.
- 1.3 Both statutory ELC and wraparound childcare for children under 5 is delivered in a mixed model across local authority nurseries (110), Funded Providers (117) in the private, voluntary and independent school sector, and via Registered Childminders (51) who are part of the Council's ELC framework.

There are a further 53 Registered Childminders within the city who choose not to be part of the statutory ELC framework preferring to work privately, offering care to children aged 0 – 12 years which is entirely funded by the parent.

- 1.4 Around 64% of eligible children aged 2-5 years access their statutory entitlement in a Council setting, with the remaining 36% using Funded Provider nurseries or a Registered Childminder. Conversely for children under 3 years old, with the exception of eligible 2 year olds, the Funded Provider nurseries admit around 64% of those who wish places with the Council services providing for the remainder.
- 1.5 Funding is provided per eligible child for up to 1140 hours of nursery or childminding provision per year, although the parent can choose to take fewer hours or alternatively can purchase additional hours over and above 1140 should they need them to support their working hours.
- 1.6 In response to demand from parents, Glasgow City Council has changed its dominant delivery model for nursery provision since planning for nursery expansion began. Repeated consultation exercises from 2015 onwards, showed a strong demand from families for services which operate all year round and which are open from 8am to 6pm. As a result, since 2017, the delivery model has shifted and now more than 2/3rds of Council nurseries operate in the parent preferred extended model. Almost all Funded Providers also operate in an extended model.

- 1.7 Total uptake of the statutory hours is around 95% for 3-5 year olds and 52% for eligible 2 year olds - with over 70% of parents choosing to use their full 1140 hours entitlement and the majority of the remainder using between 600 and 1140 hours annually. In relation to wraparound hours, over 2024/25, around 27% of parents using Council nursery provision purchased extra hours to support their working needs.

We do not hold equivalent data for Funded Provider Nurseries as we have no legal locus to hold information relating to places we do not purchase. A significant proportion of parents within private sector Funded Provider Nurseries, however, are likely to purchase additional hours or to be purchasing all hours attended where their child is under 3 years old.

- 1.8 Demand for wraparound hours in Council nurseries is high and it is not possible to meet all parent requests within the current service capacity. This is particularly significant in relation to places for children under 2 years old where we routinely receive approximately 3 times the number of applications than we have places available. Expanding access to places for this age group, however, is costly as currently there is no government funding in place to support this and providing care for the under 2's age group costs more than double the cost per hour for 3-5 year olds, due to the much higher adult to child ratios required by the regulators.
- 1.9 Childcare costs for children in Scotland under 2 years old are higher when compared to the rest of the UK, however, costs for 2-5 year olds are lower in Scotland due to the 1140 hour entitlement. In Glasgow the cost of a private sector baby place per day ranges from £60 - £75 and per week (full-time) £230 - £270. This is a significant financial challenge for many families, not just those on lower incomes. Families on lower incomes can be entitled to up to 85% of the cost of their childcare being met through the tax credits system.
- 1.10 Scottish Government is beginning to explore the potential to expand the childcare system of places for children from age 9 months and Glasgow is part of the early adopter work. A small scale test of change is currently taking place across 5 Family Wellbeing services operated by 3rd sector partners within areas of poverty. The level of funding, however, does not extend to support childcare places and the main focus of this work is based on consulting with families and service providers as to what they would like to see developed and any perceived barriers.

2. SCHOOL AGED CHILDCARE – 5-12 YEARS

- 2.1 Work with the school aged childcare (SAC) sector in Glasgow has been underway for over 25 years since the launch in 1998 of the national document *“Meeting the Childcare Challenge: A Childcare Strategy for Scotland”*, however, until 2022 no funding was ever made available specifically for the provision of SAC places.

Nonetheless, the sector has been well supported in Glasgow with subsidised access to lettable space within schools ; funding for mandatory qualifications and professional learning ; support to access the national quality improvement framework for SAC ; and for the last decade, provision of an annual conference for the sector.

- 2.2 There are currently 84 sites delivering registered SAC, across 62 organisations, operating from 60 schools and 24 community buildings, caring for c. 5,000 children (approx. 12% of the primary school aged population - c.1 place for every 10 children city wide). Registered Childminders can also offer school age childcare. SAC is predominantly delivered by 3rd sector partners in Glasgow, 62% of services are 3rd sector, 38% private sector services. The Council does not deliver any SAC services directly.
- 2.3 Quality is supported through GCC funding the Scottish Out of School Network to work with services on the “*Achieving Quality Scotland*” quality improvement framework. As a direct impact of this investment, 42% of Glasgow SAC services routinely achieve Very Good/Excellent grades at inspection, against a national average of 25%.
- 2.4 In October 2022, Scottish Government published their “Best Start – Strategic Early Learning and School Age Childcare Plan 2022 to 2026”. (<https://www.gov.scot/publications/best-start-strategic-early-learning-school-age-childcare-plan-scotland-2022-26/>) This plan set out the aspiration to embed the benefits gained from the universal 1140 hours and to develop a system of school aged childcare (SAC) and early years care for children under 2, starting with those who would benefit most.
- 2.5 Glasgow was selected as one of a small number (6) of local authorities as early adopters to begin to test out how a system for funded school aged childcare, targeted at the poorest families, might work. Work began from October 2022 with an initial allocation of £226,622 and continued across 2023/24 with further funding of £595,099 until March 2024.

From 2024, Scottish Government agreed a further 2 years funding of £2.3 million up until the end of March 2026. Unfortunately this funding was not released by government until September 2024, meaning that effectively it became 18 months worth of funding and in Year 1, it proved impossible to spend the full projected allocation within a 6 month timescale. It has recently been confirmed that funding will continue to be available over financial year 2026/27, however, the level of that funding will not be confirmed until government sets its budget in late 2025.

Small amounts of capital funding have also been provided each year to support individual SAC services to expand or develop their service. In 2025/26, capital funds of £204,361 have been allocated to support minor alterations to buildings and for 2 services, the purchase of a minibus to enable them to collect children from schools further afield.

- 2.6 The pilot work within SAC is aligned with the 10 booster wards identified by the Fairer Futures programme as the priority areas within which to tackle child poverty – these are Calton, Govan, Greater Pollok, Southside Central, Linn, Canal, East Centre, Garscadden / Scotstounhill, Drumchapel / Anniesland, and Springburn / Robroyston. The cost of places in SAC services in these areas is being subsidised for parents who meet the criteria, to either enable them to work or to access activities for their children which would otherwise be out of reach within the family budget.

Currently a total of 206 parents are accessing places for 240 children, funded across 16 service providers within the 10 wards. Feedback from parents is extremely positive in relation to the support the funding offers to enable them to take on more hours at work or simply more easily sustain what they are already doing.

- 2.7 Eligibility for funded support is driven by the criteria set out in the government's Tackling Child Poverty Plan - Lone Parents, Mother under 25, Families with 3+ children, Family with Disability, Ethnic Minority Family, Family with a Child under 1, Kinship Care Family. Additionally, the local criteria takes into account whether a family is in receipt of the Scottish Child Payment. Families can access up to 85% of their childcare costs through Universal Credit and the government funding is being used to support eligible families with the remaining cost.
- 2.8 Additionally, focused work is being carried out with 3 specialist SAC services which offer places for children with additional support needs. Places for families accessing these services who meet the poverty criteria are being funded and wider learning is taking place around the barriers and support needed for the families and children.

3. REGISTERED CHILDMINDING – 0-12 YEARS

- 3.1 Registered Childminders can care for children from birth to the end of primary school, offering the service from within their own homes. There are currently 104 childminders within the city – the lowest number over the past 20 years when numbers began to decline following changes to the regulation of the sector.
- 3.2 Recognising the value of childminding as a flexible option for families, particularly given that parents can choose to access their funded ELC entitlement with them, since 2024 Glasgow has been partnering with the Scottish Childminding Association in their targeted Urban Recruitment Programme. This programme focuses on promoting registration as a childminder as a flexible career, providing training, removing barriers to registration and with support from our Economic Development, provides small start-up grants to enable the participants to meet the costs of establishing their businesses.
- 3.3 Over 2024/25 all 18 of the places available were recruited to the programme ; 3 candidates dropped out ; 4 are registered and operating ; 5 are still working

through the training ; the remaining 6 have completed the training but are awaiting registration visits from the Care Inspectorate.

The target number for 2025/26 is 19 places and to date 11 of those places are filled, with 3 already undertaking training. The remaining 8 are awaiting approval from their housing association or landlord with regard to them using their homes for a childminding business.

If all of those who have come forward to date complete their registration this will increase childminding availability by 24% and bring numbers back up to levels not seen for approx. 10 years.

- 3.4 Delays with housing association approval has been the most significant barrier faced by new applicants with timescales of more than 8 weeks to wait for approval delaying the start dates and risking applicants dropping out due to lack of impetus. SCMA have produced a Landlord Guidance Pack and have been engaging with the Wheatley Group who have given commitments not to delay the process unnecessarily. They are keen to gain similar commitments from other housing associations and landlords.

4. Policy and Resource Implications

Resource Implications:

Financial: Core ELC budget. Early adopter work fully funded by Scottish Government. Awaiting confirmation of funding for 2026/27.

Legal: Legal services have reviewed GDPR requirements and the application process

Personnel: All personnel implications will continue to be managed in line with health advice and in discussion with unions.

Council Strategic Plan: Reduce poverty and inequality in our communities

Increase opportunity and prosperity for all our citizens

Equality and Socio-Economic Impacts:

<i>Does the proposal support the Council's Equality Outcomes</i>	Yes Outcome 1 – lack of access to childcare is a significant barrier for women entering employment or training
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2021-25? Please specify.

What are the potential equality impacts as a result of this report?

Positive impact

Please highlight if the policy/proposal will help address socio-economic disadvantage.

The delivery of universal ELC and the targeted SAC Programme support the Council's Equality Outcomes through tackling poverty by providing access to high quality early learning and childcare for all age groups, supporting families to access work, training or education.

Climate Impacts:

Does the proposal support any Climate Plan actions? Please specify:

No

What are the potential climate impacts as a result of this proposal?

N/A

Will the proposal contribute to Glasgow's net zero carbon target?

N/A

Privacy and Data Protection Impacts:

No

Are there any potential data protection impacts as a result of this report
Y/N

If Yes, please confirm that a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) has been carried out

5. Recommendations

- 5.1 It is recommended that Committee notes the progress and issues around developing childcare services and asks the Executive Director to continue to bring update reports, as required