A Blueprint for 2020: The Expansion of Early Learning and Childcare in Scotland – Consultation Analysis Report

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1. Executive Summary

1.1 The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 provided for 600 hours of annual entitlement to free early learning and childcare (ELC) for all three and four year olds, and eligible two year olds. The Scottish Government considers that there is potential for the ELC system to do even more to support the ambitions towards closing attainment and inequality gaps and intends to increase the annual entitlement to free ELC to 1140 hours by 2020.

1.2 The Scottish Government published a consultation document, *Blueprint for 2020,* to seek views on the policy choices to be made in taking forward the ambition for expanded free ELC hours. The document was published on 15 October 2016 with views invited by 9 January 2017. In addition, a series of consultative events was held across Scotland to raise awareness of the consultation and to seek views of parents directly.

1.3 336 responses to the consultation were received, 208 from individuals and 128 from organisations. The largest body of response amongst organisations came from private nurseries. A summary of the key views provided in the responses follows.

Quality of ELC provision

Support at transitions

1.4 To ensure children are fully supported at the transition stages throughout their early-learner journey, respondents emphasised the need for clear transition plans. Parents/carers were identified as playing key roles in supporting children at the transition stages; effective partnership working between ELC and school settings was also identified as crucial. Child-centred approaches were advocated with allied professionals such as health visitors, and speech and language specialists, identified as having valuable contributions to make to smooth transitions.

1.5 A common view was that sufficient capacity is required within ELC settings to release staff to support transitions, in order to allow them to access appropriate training, and liaise with partner providers over transition issues.

Delivering high quality provision to two year olds

1.6 There was much agreement that the skillset for delivering provision for two year olds requires training and experience and is different to that required for older children. A common view was that the ELC workforce will need to refresh their learning to deliver high quality provision to this age group. Greater play-based learning was suggested along with more outdoor play opportunities.

1.7 Many respondents identified the need for higher staff to child ratios in ELC settings for two year olds, with greater need for input from health visitors, and speech and language specialists.

Making the ELC sector an attractive career choice

1.8 A common theme was that the ELC sector requires signficant overhaul to present it as an attractive, long-term career choice. Perceived inconsistencies across Scotland in pay and conditions, qualifications, opportunities for career progression, and promotion in schools and colleges were amongst the factors identified as creating instability and uncertainty in the workforce.

1.9 Many agreed that the sector had the image of "last resort" and was not highly valued. A recurring view was that the qualifications associated with the ELC sector were confusing and should be modernised and simplified.

Gender balance and diversity in the ELC workforce

1.10 A recurring view was that negative attitudes towards men in the ELC profession hampered efforts to achieve a gender balance in the workforce. Many ideas were put forward to address this, including large-scale marketing campaigns showcasing male role models, and case studies of men already working in the ELC profession. A dominant theme was that schools and colleges could do much to promote the ELC sector as a legitimate career choice.

1.11 An overarching view was that improving pay and conditions will have the biggest impact on increasing diversity of the ELC workforce by attracting men into the sector.

Encouragement of the Living Wage and wider Fair Work practices

1.12 Implementing payment of the Living Wage and wider Fair Work practices across the ELC sector received much support as contributing to improving the profile and value of the profession.

1.13 A prevailing view was that more funding will be needed to support higher wage costs and the costs associated with Fair Work practices.

1.14 Key approaches to ensuring comprehensive implementation of the Living Wage and Fair Work practices were identified as: introducing a national pay and conditions framework; and making Living Wage and Fair Work practices essential requirements of the procurement of partner provision by local authorities.

Actions to support increased access to outdoor learning, exercise and play

1.15 There was much support for increased access to outdoor learning, exercise and play with the proposal for a minimum of one hour per week considered low in ambition. Many respondents suggested that a "free flow" model be promoted with children having easy and constant access to outdoor play.

1.16 Some resistance to outdoor learning amongst parents and staff was identified, with a common view that this should be addressed to make outdoor learning the norm rather than an add-on.

1.17 Structural challenges to greater outdoor learning were identified such as old settings with limited outdoor space. New national guidance on design for outdoor

learning was welcomed with suggestions that risk assessment protocol be reviewed and simplified, and funding be made available for adaptations to facilitate more outdoor access.

1.18 Many suggestions were made for local, collobarative approaches to support increased outdoor learning such as linking with local sports and physical activity providers and engaging with local active school co-ordinators. It was suggested that greater focus on outdoor activities may make the sector more appealing to men.

Improving accountability arrangements for ELC

1.19 A common view was that the sector is tightly regulated with the Care Inspectorate and Education Scotland being the two key regulators, and other national and local regulatory frameworks also applying. A dominant theme was the need to ensure accountability arrangements across these bodies are streamlined, with consistent standards and indicators applying. There was much support for combining the two main regulatory regimes into one.

1.20 Praise was given for the the current focus on outcomes in inspections, with this seen as contributing to systematic and robust inspection. A recurring view, however, was that lack of continuity between inspectors created inconsistency across inspections.

1.21 A theme emerged around the benefits of local and continuous regulation, involving local hub models of inspection; inter-agency partnership scrutiny models; self-evaluation and reflective local models. Local scrutiny frameworks were perceived to have the benefit of local knowledge whilst benefiting from national tools such as "How Good is our ELC"[1].

Flexibility

Factors to consider in delivering flexible ELC provision whilst maintaining quality

1.22 The predominant view was that the needs of the child should be central when considering the delivery of flexible ELC provision. Whilst support was expressed for parents being enabled to work or study more flexibly, there was concern over children being placed in ELC settings for long hours.

1.23 Some respondents felt that expanding to 1140 hours was challenging enough without also trying to extend flexibility of provision.

1.24 Many respondents cautioned that increasing flexiblity of provision could impact negatively on the ELC workforce who have their own work-life balance to achieve. Greater flexibility was also seen as presenting administrative challenges to ELC settings who, it was envisaged, will need to manage shift patterns, anti-social hours cover, different pay rates and constant requests from parents to

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[1] https://education.gov.scot/improvement/Pages/frwk1hgioearlyyears.aspx

change hours of provision. Some respondents felt that parents expectations may also need to be managed.

1.25 Other challenges were identified, particularly for rural areas and where specific needs have to be catered for, such as additional support needs (ASN), or Gaelic-medium.

1.26 Suggestions to make greater flexibility work were put forward and included: blending packages at local level and involving local childminders within the package; encouraging employers and colleges to be more flexible with family-friendly policies; and increased funding from Scottish Government to cover higher rates of pay for unsocial hours and more ELC staff. Support for more flexible ELC provision was notably higher in the consultation events where attendees were predominantly parents.

Ensuring fair and sustainable funding for all providers

1.27 A common view was that fair funding involved increasing the current funding provision from the Scottish Government to a level sufficient to fund the expansion of ELC and associated costs.

1.28 Some concern was expressed over the accountability of local authorities in passing on funding to partner providers, with suggestions made for: ring fencing the allocation; implementing a national standard sum to be paid to all providers; making local authorities more accountable for how they have used the funds.

Promoting and supporting the involvement of childminders in the entitlement to ELC

1.29 There was much support for childminders being part of the entitlement to ELC, perhaps within blended models of provision. Many respondents considered that parents should be educated on the benefits of childminders and that this mode of delivery of free ELC is an option.

1.30 A national recruitment and publicity campaign focusing on childminders was recommended, with the Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA) and the Care Inspectorate both identified as important in promoting childminders as providers of the ELC entitlement.

1.31 The most frequently mentioned barrier to becoming a childminder was too much paperwork and bureaucracy. Other barriers included: cost of adaptations to home environments; low pay; fluctuating pay; and scrutiny processes. Respondents considered that childminders should be subject to the same rigorous and regular inspection regimes as other providers of ELC.

1.32 A recurring theme was that childminders should have more opportunities to access training using both formal and informal learning mechanisms, from mandatory courses, to sharing best practice across networks.

Accessibility

Ensuring that the voice of children and their families is heard

1.33 There was widespread agreement that the views of children and their families should be heard and taken into account throughout the planning of the expansion. Some respondents emphasised that the views of future users of ELC services should also be sought, and also efforts should be made to ensure the voices are heard of people with disability; minority ethnic communities; those in rural areas; and those on low incomes.

1.34 A key theme was that running alongside consultation should be a programme of education to promote the expansion of free ELC provision. Both national and local promotion initiatives were envisaged.

1.35 On-going consultation rather than one-off initiatives were called for. There was general recognition that extra measures may need to be taken in the case of ensuring children's voices are heard, such as using specialists to gather their views, to ensure they are able to contribute effectively.

Ensuring equality of access for all children

1.36 There were mixed views on whether children with severe disabilities and ASN should be included in mainstream ELC, with the majority view in favour of inclusion, supported by additional, specialist help in dedicated settings.

1.37 Barriers in accessing ELC for children with disabilities and ASN were identified and included: unsuitable physical infrastructure; inadequate staffing levels; lack of awareness of families of their child's needs and the help available; and delayed identification of the child's needs.

1.38 Actions were identified to address such barriers. These included: additional funding for extra ELC staff, their training, and adaptations to the physical structures; greater access to specialist staff; review of current ELC setting infrastructure to ensure this is fit for purpose; consideration of transport issues alongside future planning of expansion of ELC hours.

Supporting higher take-up rates amongst eligible two year olds

1.39 A common view was that entitlement for eligible two year olds should be promoted via many different channels. Health visitors were identified most frequently in this regard, with GPs and social workers also mentioned often.

1.40 Some respondents considered that health visitors, Department of Work and Pensions, and inter-agency working, could all contribute to identifying those to whom the entitlement applies.

Encouraging more social enterprises and third sector providers to enter the ELC sector

1.41 A recurring view was that entering the ELC sector could be challenging for social enterprises and third sector providers, in terms of resourcing, fluctuations in

the need for ELC, attracting volunteers, ensuring suitable premises, and ensuring legislative requirements are fulfilled.

1.42 A common response was that sustainable and appropriate levels of funding will be needed to encourage more social enterprises and third sector providers into the sector. This was viewed as enabling longer-term planning, and supporting growth and quality provision.

1.43 Respondents considered that social enterprises and third sector providers could be supported with guidance on protocols, dedicated local authority officers, free training, business advice and by simplifying procedures such as the tendering model. Sharing resources and buildings was also identified as potentially helpful.

Governance arrangements supporting more community-led ELC provision

1.44 There was general agreement that the regulatory regime is demanding for community volunteers who may not have appropriate training, but are nonetheless required to meet rigorous regulations with associated responsibilities.

1.45 Common suggestions were for national and regional bodies to provide support and professional guidance to community-led ELC providers in order to facilitate their working within the current governance arrangements.

1.46 Amendments to current regulations were suggested to accommodate this sector, including Care Inspectorate, Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) and health and safety requirements.

Improving the broader system for promoting, accessing and registering for a place in an ELC setting

1.47 There was agreement that systems for accessing and registering for a place need to be made simpler, more streamlined and less confusing. Consistency in approach across and within local authorities was called for.

1.48 Health visitors, in particular, were identified as playing a key role as providers of information, in addition to GPs, local and national television and printed and social media.

1.49 Whilst the benefits of accessing entitlement and registering for a place online were acknowledged, many felt that other routes to registration should be offered to accommodate those without digital access.

1.50 A repeated view was that the current Nursery Administration Management System (NAMS) should be developed to make it fit for purpose for the demands of the expanded hours entitlement.

Affordability

Barriers to accessing support with the costs of ELC provision and ensuring additional hours are affordable

1.51 A common view was that the tax and social security systems, which could provide help to those facing financial barriers, are complex and difficult to understand. Many considered that awareness raising, and help with understanding the financial assistance on offer, would support parents in accessing ELC provision beyond funded entitlement.

1.52 Three key ways to ensure additional hours are affordable were put forward: Scottish Government to subsidise costs by providing greater funding to ELC providers; making it easier for parents to pay by permitting flexible payment models including payment directly from salary/benefits; and subsidising some of the hidden costs such as free transport and lunches.

Encouraging private and third sector providers to extend capacity

1.53 A recurring view was that quality of provision should not be compromised in efforts to expand quantity of provision.

1.54 The most common view, expressed across a wide range of sectors, was that to encourage private and third sector providers to extend their capacity, more funding will be required for these providers, e.g. for increased staffing, paying Living Wages, training, capital investment in adaptations to premises.

1.55 Another significant theme was for such providers to work in partnership in clusters, to plan future needs and provision strategically, making best use of available local resources and facilities, such as under-used school facilities outwith school terms.

Financing and delivering the expansion

Funding model options

1.56 Amongst those respondents who provided a clear view, most supported a demand-led model of funding, whereby funding follows the child, parents and carers choose the provider and the funding follows, whilst still being administered by local authorities.

1.57 This model of funding was identified as the best approach to supporting the vision for high quality and flexible ELC, which is accessible and affordable for all. Other key advantages identified included providing parents with real choice over ELC provision, and avoiding local authorities using allocated ELC funding elsewhere. The main drawbacks envisaged were that too much flexibility could result in parents changing their needs frequently, leading to uncertainty of take-up and fragility of settings, particularly in rural areas.

1.58 Some respondents favoured a model of funding dependent on delivery, with funds routed through the local government block grant. Key advantages identified were ensuring a co-ordinated and sustainable approach; the model is already well understood; able to cope with changes in demand. Drawbacks were also envisaged, such as limiting parental choice; bureaucratic; and uncertainty over how much funding will be allocated.

1.59 Early learning and childcare accounts received some support as a potential funding option with benefits including giving parents choice and reducing bureaucracy. Drawbacks included lack of certainty for private providers and local authorities; and risk of parents using funds for other things.

Phasing of the expanded hours

1.60 A common view was that the expansion will require detailed planning to ensure the necessary physical and workforce infrastructures are in place to support additional hours.

1.61 Many respondents emphasised the need for early information on funding for the expansion to help long-term planning.

1.62 Regarding approaches to phasing in the expanded hours, most support was expressed for local targeting of expanded provision, depending on local circumstances. Priorities for early expanded entitlement were identified as: deprived areas; expansion across a variety of settings, including childminders; working parents; and by age of child (either oldest to youngest or vice versa).

2. Introduction

2.1 The Scottish Government's aim is to make Scotland the best place in the world to grow up, and to give all children in Scotland the best possible start in life.

2.2 The early years are crucial in every child's life and evidence shows that access to high quality early learning and childcare[2] (ELC) is important to improving children's outcomes, and a cornerstone to closing attainment and inequality gaps.

2.3 The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 provided for 600 hours of annual entitlement to free ELC for all three and four year olds, and eligible two year olds. The Act also made it a legal requirement for all local authorities to consult parents in order to increase flexibility over how funded hours are accessed. This was a significant milestone in marking, for the first time, the statutory right to more flexible options for childcare.

2.4 The Scottish Government considers that there is potential for the ELC system to do even more to support the ambitions towards closing attainment and inequality gaps, and to transform children's lives. To this end, they intend to almost double the annual entitlement to free ELC to 1140 hours by 2020 for all three and four year olds, and eligible two year olds. Their vision for the expansion is to deliver high quality, flexible ELC which is affordable and accessible for all.

2.5 In expanding the ELC entitlement, The Scottish Government proposes that actions will be built upon the following high level themes:
- Quality
- Flexibility
- Accessibility
- Affordability

2.6 It is acknowledged that this is a pivotal movement in developing the policy approach to implementing this ambition. Information about what is working well regarding current provision has been published in the *Financial review of early learning and childcare in Scotland: the current landscape,* (Sept, 2016). The Scottish Government is also reviewing the system of ELC and school education as part of *Empowering teachers, parents and communities to achieve Excellence and Equity in Education – a Governance Review.*

2.7 Alongside these reviews, the Scottish Government published a consultation document, *Blueprint for 2020,* to seek views on the range of policy choices faced in taking forward the ambition for 1140 hours of free ELC by 2020. The consultation was published on 15 October 2016 with views invited by 9 January 2017. 20 open-ended questions were posed with views sought on policy choices; funding models; and phasing of provision. Responses were invited via Citizen Space or by emailing a dedicated mailbox. Emailed responses directly to the Scottish Government policy

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[2] Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) refers to the learning journey that takes place from birth, and reflects EU and OECD recommended models of integrated education and care.

team were also accepted. A series of consultative events was also held across Scotland to raise awareness of the consultation and to seek views of parents directly.

2.8 This report presents the analysis of views contained in the responses to the consultation. The views from the consultative events are also summarised and presented in this report.

Consultation responses and analysis

2.9 The Scottish Government received 336 responses to the consultation. Table 2.1 shows the distribution of responses by category of respondent. A full list of respondents is in the Annex. The respondent category applied to each response was agreed with the Scottish Government policy team.

Table 2.1: Distribution of responses by category of respondent

Category	No.	%
Private Nurseries	33	10
Local Government	29	9
Third Sector and Voluntary Organisations	23	7
Further Education and Higher Education	8	2
Local Government Nurseries and Schools	6	2
Third Sector and Voluntary Providers	6	2
Parent Representative Bodies	5	1
Unions	5	1
National Inspection and Improvement Bodies	5	1
Others	8	2
Total organisations	**128**	**38**
Individuals	208	62
Total	**336**	**100**

NB Percentages do not add to 100% exactly due to rounding.

2.10 62% of responses were submitted by individuals; 38% came from organisations. The largest category of respondent amongst the organisations was private nurseries comprising 10% of all respondents. Amongst the individual respondents many defined themselves as: parents; ELC practitioners; private nursery employers and employees; teachers, ex-teachers; and childminders.

2.11 Most respondents provided a response to all or most of the questions using the Citizen Space online system. The Citizen Space content was then exported onto an Excel database by the analyst to enable comparison of views between respondents and across respondent sectors. In total, 181 respondents requested that their views remain anonymous. A further 55 respondents requested that they did not wish their response to be published. These preferences are respected in this report, for example, in the selection of quotes to illustrate specific points.

2.12 The Scottish Government held seven consultative events with parents across Scotland to facilitate discussion on the key topics in the consultation. Scottish Government officials took detailed notes from the events from which summaries were compiled by the analyst and are inserted under each question in the report, where relevant.

2.13 The structure of this report follows that of the consultation document. Chapter 3 focuses on views on quality of provision (Questions 1 – 7); Chapter 4 presents responses to questions 8 – 10 on flexibility of provision; Chapter 5 addresses issues of accessibility and summarises views in response to questions 11 – 16; Chapter 6 presents responses to questions 17 and 18 on affordability; and Chapter 7 relates to questions 19 and 20 on financing and delivery of the ambition.

3. Quality of ELC Provision

Transitions

Children face a number of transitions throughout their early-learner journey. For example, from the home to ELC, across different ELC settings, within those settings, and into school. The system must ensure that these transitions support continuity, coherence and progression.

Question 1: How do we ensure children are fully supported at the transition stages throughout their early-learner journey? What support should be provided to ensure that the ELC workforce and teachers have the skills, knowledge and capacity to support transitions?

3.1 305 respondents (91%) answered this question.

Views on ensuring children are fully supported at the transition stages

3.2 Views revolved around the following themes:

Need to establish structured transition policies and plans

3.3 An overarching theme across several sectors was the need for ELC settings to establish clear plans relating to transition stages and "settling in" periods. Planning and implementing structured programmes of actions were viewed as ways to facilitate smooth transitions to support children.

3.4 "Transition policies" and "settling in" policies were both mentioned in responses, with some respondents providing specific examples of practice which had worked well in their setting, for example, "Stay and Play" sessions whereby parents/carers are encouraged to attend ELC sessions with their child to ease their integration into the ELC setting, whilst also benefiting from getting to know staff and the ethos of the setting, and meeting other families.

3.5 A few respondents emphasised the need for promoting awareness and understanding of such policies amongst the ELC staff and parents.

Need to involve parents/carers in supporting transition

3.6 Many respondents, particularly individuals and local government bodies, identified parents/carers as having a key role to play in supporting children at the transition stages. It was suggested that parents/carers should be educated in ways to do this, and the significance of the transitional stages impressed upon them. The phrase, "transition starts a home" was used.

3.7 A common theme was the need for effective partnership working between ELC and school settings and parents/families. Respondents from a wide range of sectors emphasised the need for strong communication between ELC staff and

parents, time dedicated to engagement with families, and the importance of ELC staff and schools building up a picture of each child's home and family life, in order to support them best at transition stages.

Involving other practitioners
3.8 Several local government bodies and individuals in particular suggested that professionals outwith the key ELC and teaching sectors should also be involved in ensuring smooth transitions. Childminders, health visitors and speech and language specialists were identified as having potentially valuable contributions to make in preparing children for transition, and providing key background information to help in planning their transition.

Adopting individualised approaches
3.9 Within the context of an overarching transition policy, individualised approaches to meet the needs of each child were recommended by respondents from a range of sectors. One individual referred to this as "one-to-one transitioning". To support children best, suggestions were made for flexible approaches, at the child's pace, gradual, in short phases.

3.10 It was highlighted by a few respondents that children will go to school from a variety of different nursery settings, with some attending more than one pre-school setting, demonstrating the need for individualised approaches to settling them into their new environment.

3.11 A small number of respondents (private nursery and individuals) considered that the decision on when to move children from one stage to another should be made jointly between parents and ELC staff.

3.12 The need to introduce more flexibility into timing of transitions was suggested by a few respondents across four different sectors. In particular, there was support for moving away from age-led criteria for starting school, to either delaying this age, or focusing more on readiness to start school.   One respondent recommended exploring the benefits of a flexible "deferral" system in which delayed starting school for some children is viewed positively.

Support from key people through transition
3.13 A common theme was that a way of supporting children through ELC transitions is to ensure they have a dedicated supporter with them throughout. Depending on context, parents/carers, key workers, and named persons were all identified as having a role to play.

3.14 Key workers were considered to be important in being able to plan ahead, provide information to make the transition smoother, liaise with workers at the next stage, attend the next setting with the child, and provide appropriate support until the child is settled.

Transition visits and meetings

3.15 Many respondents recommended planned programmes of visits for children in preparation for moving to the next stage of their ELC journey. The importance of building these into transition plans was emphasised. One individual described a "buddy scheme" whereby children from the new setting visit those preparing to move on, as part of the transition process.

3.16 A common view was that visits should be phased and gradual, building up time spent at the new setting, and supported throughout by key and familiar people, to help children accommodate the change.

3.17 Another recurring suggestion was for planned programmes of meetings and engagement between key members of the workforce at the old and new settings in order to exchange information. It was acknowledged that this may involve many different personnel, for example, where children from a variety of ELC settings move on to primary school. Some respondents envisaged regular meetings leading up to transition, between nursery staff, primary school staff and parents; a local government nursery school described how the nursery teacher made visits to local playgroups each term to support transition.

Challenges

3.18 A number of key challenges were identified which respondents flagged as requiring careful planning and handling to ensure children are supported appropriately:

- Children who have ASN.
- Children whose first language is not English.
- Where there are several private nurseries feeding into a primary school or nursery and where additional time will be required to ensure adequate liaison and engagement prior to, and during, transition.

Views on the support to be provided to ensure that the ELC workforce and teachers have the skills, knowledge and capacity to support transitions

3.19 Views on ensuring that the ELC workforce and teachers have the skills, knowledge and capacity to support transitions revolved around the following themes:

Level of staffing

3.20 A common view across a wide range of sectors was that ELC workforce and teacher staffing levels should ideally be such that there is capacity for practitioners to devote time to focusing on transitions, to work in partnership with families and other practitioners on transitions, and to undertake the relevant continued professional development to ensure their skills and knowledge are kept up-to-date:

"There must be capacity across all providers to ensure high quality transition from home, between providers and to primary school. This means that settings and schools must have more staffing than the bare minimum required for pupil contact time. There must be clear expectations about, mechanisms for and understanding of transition practices. This should include protected time for nursery staff, health

visitors, etc to properly engage with transition processes" (Representative Body).

3.21 Another recurring view was that ratios of staff to children should allow for staff to get to know each child individually, and thereby gain more knowledge in how best to support the child through transitions.

3.22 A few respondents suggested that what they perceived to be increasing amounts of paperwork in the ELC sector, limited the capacity of the ELC workforce and teachers to spend time on supporting transitions. Other challenges mentioned less frequently were staffing to support the transitions of children with ASNs; ensuring workforce capacity and appropriate ratios in rural areas; maintaining adequate levels of support assistants and support specialists, particularly in primary schools; and coping with what some perceived to be constantly changing ELC policies and protocol which took time to adjust to.

Remuneration for ELC practitioners
3.23 A small number of respondents, largely individuals, identified issues of pay for ELC staff as needing to be addressed in order to enable practitioners to support children through their early-learner journey effectively. Their key concerns were:
- For ELC staff to devote additional time to upskilling for transitions, there should be some financial gain, as training is done largely in their own (unpaid) time.
- For ELC staff to be motivated to go on to undertake professional qualifications, there should be a financial benefit.
- To facilitate partnership working with other professionals working in this field, there should be greater equity in pay across sectors.
- Additional Scottish Government funding is required in order that private nurseries can pay salaries commensurate with those paid in local government establishments and reflective of the qualifications of the staff.

Effective partnership working
3.24 A common view across many sectors was that closer collaborative working with strong communication between practitioner settings is essential to ensuring that the ELC workforce and teachers have the knowledge to support transitions. Several respondents emphasised that such partnership working should be underpinned by transition policies, with time allocated to execute the plans.

3.25 Many respondents across a range of sectors emphasised the need for shared understandings, values, ethos, expectations and ambition regarding children's ELC transitions, and suggested a key way to engender this as joint training across sectors. In particular, some specified that childminders should be enabled to attend joint training, and the importance of involving private nursery practitioners with others.

3.26 A few local government and individual respondents suggested that clear, cross-sectoral guidelines on the importance of transitions and their management could be very useful in promoting joint working and understandings.

3.27 A few respondents, including representative bodies and individuals, commented that practitioner respect for others across different settings is essential in order to gain maximum benefit from collaborative working. For example, a representative body remarked that private and third sector settings often had much experience from managing children's transitions from an early age.

Sharing of information
3.28 The need for ELC and teaching sectors to share relevant information about children to aid transitions was a common theme across several sectors. Some respondents emphasised the requirement for good quality, detailed information, and suggested ways to ensure consistency, such as standard documents to be used across settings, "transition profiles", a "universal document" and the like. One individual requested systems to be in place for community/third sector groups to share the useful information they have on children and their families.

Training
3.29 A common theme was that the ELC workforce and teachers should be supported with appropriate training to equip them with the skills and knowledge they require to guide children through transition stages. Many respondents made general comments regarding the need for highly qualified staff, with the necessary skills to work in this field.

3.30 A few respondents urged that qualified teachers are deployed within ELC settings, and that there should be funding available for nursery staff to embark on under-graduate courses of relevance.

3.31 A recurring theme was that training should be viewed as career-long, needing regularly updated, continued professional development being key. In-house training was envisaged as part of this, with capacity needed to release staff from frontline duties for this purpose.

3.32 A repeated view was that training should be relevant and involve a range of approaches such as shadowing and visits to gold standard establishments to observe effective practice. A few respondents suggested that colleges and other training providers review their course content to ensure up-to-date relevance, focusing on the outcomes and competencies around transition. Latest research was identified as potentially informing course content and generating valuable lessons on transitions. Several respondents suggested that best practice on transitions could be usefully shared as part of learning.

3.33 Several respondents across a variety of sectors recommended specific topics for training, listed below from most to least frequently mentioned:
- Transition support
- Child development/developmental stages
- Attachment
- Play-based learning
- Additional support needs and transition support

3.34 There were a few suggestions, largely from individuals, for teachers to have more training in early years, including placements in early years' settings.

Views relating to Question 1 emerging from consultative events

3.35 The overarching views to emerge related to ensuring consistency for children and for parents/carers. Emphasis was placed on minimising the number of transitions taking place, particularly for vulnerable children. For families with more than one child requiring ELC, a holistic view to planning transitions was required, with emphasis on siblings provided for in one setting. Consistency across local authorities in supporting children at the transition stages was requested.

Question 2: What support is required to ensure that the ELC workforce have the skills, knowledge and capacity to deliver high quality provision for two year olds? How can the ELC sector best meet the specific learning, developmental and environmental needs of two year olds? What approach should be taken on the transition for these children when they turn three?

3.36 297 respondents (88%) answered this question.

Views on ensuring the ELC workforce have the skills, knowledge and capacity to deliver high quality provision for two year olds

3.37 There was overarching agreement that the skillset for delivering provision for two year olds is specialist, requires training and experience, and is different to that required for older children.

3.38 The most common response across sectors was that the ELC workforce will require to upskill and refresh their learning in order to deliver high quality provision for two year olds. Relevant training, tailored to provision of care for two year olds, was viewed as crucial, with many respondents identifying knowledge of pre-birth to three national guidance and Building the Ambition[3] as fundamental to all those working with this age group. A small number of respondents recommended a clear training framework to aid consistency in approach.

3.39 A few individual respondents suggested relevant training should be made mandatory. Others, from a range of sectors, gave their view that workforce leaders, such as nursery managers and headteachers, should also be required to undertake such training. A small number of respondents across different sectors considered that the training of childminders working with two year olds should be addressed as a priority, with joint training across sectors and settings suggested.

3.40 A few respondents, largely individuals, called for qualified teachers to be within all ELC settings delivering provision to two year olds.

3.41 There was some demand for more accessible and affordable learning opportunities, underpinned by more resources, particularly for private sector

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[3] http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0045/00458455.pdf

nursery staff. Suggestions were made for varied outlets such as online learning; local opportunities for training; and in-service and in-house training; and peer monitoring.

3.42 A common theme was that private nurseries and third sector/community settings already have a wealth of experience in delivering ELC provision to two year olds and this expertise could be usefully harnassed for training purposes. Suggestions were made for placements in such settings; observations; shadowing; and sharing good practice.

3.43 Some respondents specified topics for training which they considered important for this age group. The most commonly mentioned are listed below from most to least mentioned:

- Child development; social and emotional development
- Nurture/attachment
- Mental health/autism
- Play
- Providing for children with ASN

Views on how the ELC sector can best meet the specific learning, developmental and environmental needs of two year olds

3.44 A common view, largely from individuals, was that ELC staffing levels will need to increase to ensure ratios of staff to children are more suited to this younger age group. Several respondents commented on how resource-intense provision for two year olds has to be to cater for their needs.

3.45 Higher staffing levels were also seen as necessary in order to enable staff to build relationships with parents and families and also other professionals such as health visitors, and speech and language specialists, who may be more involved at this age.

3.46 The notion of supporting parents and children together, helping with parenting skills and involving parents in ELC care, was put forward by a few, with a local authority and some individuals suggesting further development of family learning centres and hubs. A few respondents envisaged ELC staff making regular visits to children's homes to facilitate closer working with parents and carers.

3.47 It was generally agreed that provision for two year olds would be play-based with opportunity for art, movement, dance, singing, sensory play, and story-telling all expected to be key elements. A few respondents, largely individuals, emphasised what they perceived to be the need for outdoor play opportunities.

3.48 A repeated theme was that the ethos should be one of nurturing the child, adopting an individualised approach based on time spent with the child, observing them and gradually understanding their preferences and abilities.

3.49 Many organisations, from across different sectors, emphasised the need for adapting current premises to ensure suitable provision for two year olds in terms of: toileting and nappy changing areas; rest areas; space for feeding; and space for carefully selected age-appropriate play equipment.

3.50 A few respondents suggested that provision should be made for more "stay and play" opportunities for parents and carers.

3.51 A small but significant body of respondents (largely individuals) expressed concern over children of this age entering into local authority ELC settings before they are ready. What some perceived to be the benefits of childminders over ELC nursery settings were outlined, with some suggestions that childminders could be utilised more within ELC settings to help children settle, and to work with small clusters of children.

Views on what approach should be taken on the transition for these children when they turn three

3.52 Views overlapped to some extent with those provided in response to the previous question. The most common view expressed was that timing of transition should be based on readiness rather than age. Rather than a one-off event, respondents viewed transition to be an on-going process with gradual preparations made to equip each child for the next stage.

3.53 The need for continuity between the original and the receiving setting was emphasised, with suggestions made for key people to make the transition with the child, and stay for a "settling" period.

3.54 Effective communication and partnership working between the original and receiving settings, in addition to close working with relevant support professionals such as health visitors, were viewed as essential for smooth transitions. A well structured transition plan was also identified as important.

3.55 A key emerging theme was that efforts could be made to minimise transitions for children of this age. Ideas for this included: adopting a two to five year approach; using a childminder throughout; ensuring new builds include appropriate accommodation for two year olds; and ensuring the child stays with the same provider throughout their early years. It was highlighted by several respondents (individuals and private nurseries in particular) that private nurseries already make provision for two to five year olds, therefore their transitions do not involve movement between settings.

Views relating to Question 2 emerging from consultative events

3.56 Participants in one event identified a greater role for childminders working with this age group. This was also viewed as avoiding stigmatising vulnerable two year olds.

3.57 A need for an expanded and diversified workforce was identified to address the increased requirement for provision for this age group. Some participants, however, expressed concern that this may reduce the level of experience of the

workforce overall, with one idea being to limit the number of trainees in any one setting.

A highly qualified and diverse ELC workforce

The delivery of a quality ELC experience will continue to be driven by the dedicated and highly skilled and qualified ELC workforce. The expansion will see this workforce grow substantially, resulting in the creation of new positions across all grades providing employment opportunities for new entrants to the sector, as well as progression opportunities for existing staff.

The Scottish Government considers it vital that as part of the expansion, the skills and qualifications profile of the ELC workforce is raised, diversity is increased, and there is greater gender balance in the workforce.

Question 3: How can the qualification routes and career paths that are open to ELC practitioners be developed to ensure that the ELC sector is seen as an attractive long-term career route?

3.58 292 respondents (87%) answered this question.

3.59 There was widespread, cross-category agreement that the ELC sector required significant overhaul to present it as an attractive, long-term career route. Of particular concern was what was viewed as current inconsistencies across Scotland, local authority areas, and providers, in: pay and conditions; routes into the sector; opportunities for upskilling and career path progression; qualifications required; and promotion through schools and colleges. Such inconsistencies were perceived to create instability and uncertainty in the workforce and inhibit long-term career aspirations.

3.60 A new national framework was supported for pay and conditions; and a national training strategy was called for to streamline and clarify routes into the sector, and opportunities once in post.

3.61 A summary of the main themes follows.

Views on perceptions of the sector

3.62 It was generally agreed that sector is not currently valued highly, particularly in relation to the teaching profession, with relatively low pay one main contributor to the image of a "Cinderella" or "last resort" profession.

3.63 A dominant view was that pay should at least represent a living wage and should incentivise those taking further qualifications and gaining more experience, by rewarding them accordingly. Low pay was viewed by many as off-putting to men in particular, who otherwise might consider this sector for a career. The prevalence of short-term contracts was also a major drawback for those seeking a reliable income and a job for the future. One respondent commented:

"As a parent, I don't want to participate in a system where the people who look after my children have to be amongst the lowest paid in society" (Individual).

3.64 A recurring view, across private sector nurseries in particular, was that more funding is required from the Scottish Government to enable them to pay staff higher salaries. Many considered that without this the current inequity in pay between the private and the local authority sectors will continue, resulting in instability in the workforce as practitioners migrate to more lucrative posts.

3.65 A common view was that the increasing expectations and demands placed on the sector, for example from the Care Inspectorate, were not matched by increased financial gain, leading to low morale and perceptions of being under-valued.

3.66 There were many calls for greater alignment with the teaching profession as a means to achieve higher status. Ways to do this were suggested and included: greater respect for the BA in Childhood Practice as a credible qualification on par with the BA in Education; terms and conditions in line with those offered in the teaching profession; clear career progression which includes routes into teaching; greater fluidity between professionals moving between the two sectors; and respect for skills and input of leaders in the ELC sector as with leaders in the teaching profession.

3.67 Several respondents identified the terminology of ELC as potentially hampering its portrayal as a legitimate, long-term career option. A repeated view was that "practitioners" was frequently used to cover a wide variety of roles of different stature, diminishing their individual value, and not respecting and valuing each of their contributions. A common view was that greater clarity and consistency are required in terminology of the roles and responsibilitites of the different ELC posts in order to attract newcomers to the sector.

3.68 A recurring view was that school careers advisors and training colleges have a key part to play in promoting the sector as an attractive option and a credible choice for those looking for a long-term career. A few respondents suggested that work needs to be done to overturn the image of ELC as "women's work". An example given was that of Ayrshire College where a course "Men into Care" is offered.

3.69 There was support across sectors for a dedicated marketing campaign to promote the value and credibility of the sector for long-term career prospects.

Views on ELC career path and qualifications

3.70 There was general agreement that currently there is no clear career path to aspire to in the sector. Inconsistency within and across different local authority regions was seen as contributing to this, for example, qualified teachers being removed from nurseries in some areas and re-instated elsewhere. Calls were made for transparency in career options; several respondents requested a nationally recognised plan or map of the ELC career pathway, incorporating relevant qualifications and timeframes. A few respondents suggested that more information should be available on entry points to the sector.

3.71 Childminders were referred to by a few respondents, across different categories, as requiring special attention regarding their career path. One representative body remarked that not much is known about their choices in career, their progressions and their options, yet they represent a valuable and integral aspect of delivering ELC.

3.72 A common view was that the qualifications associated with the ELC sector are confusing and should be modernised. A repeated request was for simplification and streamlining and for the current qualifications to be reviewed to assess their fit for purpose. For example, a few respondents identified the BA Education as offering expertise in teaching and learning but limited in terms of content on childhood; the BA in Childhood Practice was seen as focused on leadership and management but not strong on child pedagogy and curriculum.

3.73 A few respondents emphasised the need for nationally recognised qualifications which would be acknowledged in other jurisdictions in cases of transfer.

3.74 A small number of respondents, including a few local authorities, suggested that relevant qualifications should be included in the school curriculum at national 4 and 5 level.

Views on facilitating routes in and career paths

3.75 Many respondents recommended innovative approaches to facilitating routes into the profession such as free access to training for older returners; family-friendly policies to enable the children of ELC workers to be catered for; expansion of apprenticeship schemes in secondary schoools; and greater opportunity to progress through training once in the sector, with options such as distance learning, on-the-job training, paid attendance at courses, and chances to pursue specialist interests such as speech therapy.

Views relating to Question 3 emerging from consultative events

3.76 General views were that the sector is not highly valued at present, with low pay and long hours contributing to this image. There was support for an increased profile for the BA in Childhood Practice. The terminology used to describe the profession was identified as requiring review in order to present greater appeal.

3.77 Participants identified capacity of the workforce as challenging, with suggestions for ways to recruit more personnel into the profession. Calls were made for innovative ways to broaden pathways into the workforce and career paths once within the profession. Parents of children receiving ELC and those working in ELC in a voluntary capacity were identified as potential candidates for the future paid workforce.

Question 4: How can we increase the diversity of the ELC workforce, in particular increasing the gender balance in the sector?

3.78 270 respondents (80%) answered this question.

3.79 By far the most common response was that improving pay and conditions would have the biggest impact on increasing diversity of the ELC workforce by attracting more men into the sector. Longer-term contracts and greater flexibility in hours were also identified as key factors.

3.80 Another recurring theme was the need for a large-scale promotion of ELC as a respected and valuable profession with significant impact on the long-term development of children.

3.81 A number of more specific approaches to attracting greater numbers of men into the ELC workforce were suggested, with the most frequently mentioned listed below:

- Well publicised progression/career structure within the profession.

- Large-scale marketing campaign aimed at men, showcasing case studies and examples of men already working in the profession; identification of "champions" or "ambassadors" to portray the sector in a positive way using images and information which men will relate to.

- Opening up a variety of routes into the profession in addition to the traditional approaches. For example, apprenticeships; engaging men to deliver sessions in sport, gardening, creative subjects, as a first step in. Encouraging men into childminding roles, perhaps with partners, as a taster, and opportunity for initial experience.

- Being much more specific in distinguishing between, and defining the different roles on offer within the ELC workforce. Re-branding some to make them more attractive to men (for example, "Centre manager" was suggested).

- Changing the focus of promotion of ELC from "nurturing" to "adventure" with outdoor space and play to appeal to men's interests and strengths.

- Valuing qualifications in fields such as outdoor learning and sports development as potentially useful to the ELC sector.

- Ensuring men who commence the route into the sector are supported by buddying and mentoring schemes involving other men.

Views on challenges to attracting more men into the ELC workforce

3.82 Negative attitudes towards men in the ELC profession were identified by many respondents as hampering efforts to achieve a gender balance in the ELC sector. Respondents identified cultural stereotyping of women as those who look after children, and described societal suspicion of the motives of men who choose to enter the sector:

"Significant attitudinal change is required within society as a whole to counteract the myth that caring, nurturing roles, including those with children, are the domain of women" (Representative Body).

Views on more general actions to promote diversity

3.83 A recurring theme was that schools and colleges could do much to promote the ELC sector as a legitimate career choice. A few respondents suggested that more use be made of placements within ELC settings; work experience; apprenticeships in the sector; and addressing stereotypes of ELC being women's work.

3.84 A small number of respondents advocated positive action to target groups under-represented in the ELC sector, for example, targeted job adverts; balancing the gender ratio in FE/HE recruitment onto courses; running men only training courses; providing bursaries and grants for men only; advertising certain posts in minority languages in minority community settings.

3.85 Some respondents identified what they had experienced as successful initiatives aimed at increasing the number of men in the profession. Men in Childcare and Glasgow City Council's "Approved by Dads" were mentioned, as was the organisation, Men in Childcare.

3.86 A small number of respondents across several different categories suggested that there is much to learn from other countries who have managed to increase diversity in their childcare workforce. They also recommended examining relevant research and building on positive approaches from this.

Views relating to Question 4 emerging from consultative events

3.87 There was agreement that there can be stigma attached to men entering the ELC profession, with more acceptance of men within primary and secondary schooling, rather than in pre-school settings. Suggestions were made to address this, such as schools and colleges promoting ELC as a profession for men, using role models from within the ELC sector to promote to other men, and including examples of men within ELC in case studies.

3.88 The current pay for the ELC workforce was viewed as off-putting and not appropriate for a main wage-earner within a family.

3.89 Participants at one event highlighted older people as potential recruits to the ELC sector, and suggested that accessibility to training should be made easier to facilitate older people's entry into the ELC workforce.

Living Wage and Fair Work practices

To make a career in ELC a more attractive long-term proposition, the Scottish Government considers that Fair Work practices should be encouraged across the sector. This includes ensuring that workers within the sector are appropriately remunerated, and that they have an ability to combine work with their own family commitments.

The Scottish Government is committed to promoting Fair Work practices across all sectors, and their aspiration is that all workers should be paid at least the Living Wage.

Question 5: How can payment of the Living Wage and wider Fair Work practices be encouraged across the ELC sector?

3.90 249 respondents (74%) addressed this question.

3.91 There was almost universal agreement that payment of the Living Wage and wider Fair Work practices should be implemented across the ELC sector. Introducing these practices was viewed as part of improving the profile of the workforce, valuing its contribution and respecting the importance and potential impact of the profession. Many respondents, particularly those in the public sector, reported that they already operated under these practices.

3.92 Whilst payment of the Living Wage and introducing wider Fair Work practices were supported, a dominant theme across several categories of respondent was that this cannot happen across the entire ELC sector until the true costs of operation are examined and long-term funding established. A recurring view was that a strategic approach should be adopted to planning the expansion and development of ELC, within the framework of Living Wage and wider Fair Work practices. Barriers and incentives should be part of the planning, which should take into consideration the different geographical context of ELC providers, particularly those in rural areas.

3.93 Many respondents envisaged significant benefits from the introduction of the Living Wage and wider Fair Work practices. Some suggested that the Scottish Government and/or local government take the lead in promoting these across the sector. Road shows, guidance, and sharing best practice were mentioned. A few respondents identified improved staff well-being, morale, flexibility, more opportunties to migrate across sectors, greater equity across sectors, less absenteeism, and better staff retention, as benefits.

Views on funding the Living Wage and wider Fair Work practices

3.94 The prevailing view was that more funding will be needed to support higher wage costs and the costs associated with wider Fair Work practices, such as increased staffing to allow for greater flexibility in work patterns. Local government respondents, in particular, emphasised the need for the Scottish Government to provide them with more funding to procure providers who are paying staff the Living Wage.

3.95 A few suggestions were made on funding these practices within current budgets:

- Ring-fencing early years' funding within local authorities.
- Asking parents to pay more for childcare.
- Lowering business rates for ELC providers.

- Lowering or removing VAT rating for childcare.
- Provision of free training for the ELC workforce.

Views on implementation and enforcement

3.96 Two main approaches to ensuring comprehensive implementation of the Living Wage and Fair Work practices were identified repeatedly as:

- Introducing a national pay and conditions framework in order to produce a level playing field with national benchmarks and a national, standardised structure across all sectors.
- Make Living Wage and Fair Work practices key requirements within the procurement of partner provision of ELC.

3.97 There was also some support, particularly amongst individual respondents, for making these practices mandatory through legislation.

3.98 A small number of respondents, largely individuals, identified the need for regular monitoring and inspecting/regulating the exercise of these practices across settings.

Views on incentives

3.99 Many respondents identified the broad, longer-term benefits, outlined in 3.93 above, as positive outcomes which should encourage providers to introduce these practices. In addition, a few suggested immediate, more tangible incentives including accreditation; national recognition; acclaim from the Care Inspectorate; and certificates to mark the achievement.

Views relating to Question 5 emerging from consultative events

3.100 Prevailing views were that offering a Living Wage would go some way to attracting men into the profession and also raise the profile of the ELC sector as a potential career option.

ELC settings designed to maximise the experience for children

ELC will take place in physical environments, indoors and out, designed to maximise the experience for children and improve the quality of learning.

To ensure that world class settings for delivering high quality ELC are delivered, the Scottish Government is working with partners, including the Care Inspectorate and Scottish Futures Trust, to develop new, good design guidance for all ELC settings, which will be published by summer 2017.

Question 6: What actions should be taken to support increased access to outdoor learning, exercise and play?

3.101 293 respondents (87%) addressed this question.

3.102 There was widespread agreement across respondent sectors on the importance of taking actions to increase access to outdoor learning, exercise and

play, in terms of physical health and opportunities for play and learning. Many providers described how they were already promoting outdoor access and activities.   Childminders in particular, reported daily outdoor experiences.

3.103 The encouragement for ELC providers to ensure children have a minimum of one hour per week outside was viewed by many respondents as low in ambition. A recurring view, across several sectors, was for a minimum not to be stipulated, but instead the notion of "free flow" to be promoted, with children having free choice whether to play outdoors or in. A few respondents requested consistency in message across Scotland, and across related policies, for example, the physical activity strategy.

Views on challenges to increased outdoor access

3.104 A common view was that attitudes towards outdoor learning need to be addressed, with resistance identified amongst some parents and staff. Respondents emphasised the need for outdoor learning to be considered the norm, not an optional extra, to take place whatever the weather, and outdoors to be a place where learning can take place.

3.105 Other challenges frequently raised were:

- Old ELC settings in run-down buildings with limited outdoor space.
- Limited funding to make adaptations for outdoor learning, such as safety adaptations and equipment.
- Inadequate staff to child ratios to accommodate outdoor learning.
- Lack of appropriate clothing (staff and child).
- Poor transport links.
- Particularly in urban areas, lack of close access to safe outdoor environments such as parks and farms.
- Health and safety issues and risk assessments.

Views on frameworks to overcome challenges

3.106 Many respondents envisaged a "holistic" approach to overcoming challenges and promoting increased outdoor access. This involved securing "buy in" from staff, parents and local community; mainstreaming the notion of outdoor learning into all future planning and design, structure of the day, staff and parent education, and promoting outdoor learning, exercise and play as a part of home and ELC life.

3.107 Creating the future framework for outdoor learning was seen as involving a number of drivers, the most frequently mentioned being:

- Provision of national guidance and design as an early priority (acknowledged that this will be published by the Scottish Government in summer 2017); on staffing ratios; on risk assessments. Some organisations referred to existing guidance such as "My World Outdoors" and guidance on the National

Improvement Hub and Care Inspectorate website as particularly useful. National organisations such as Play Scotland were also identified as having a guidance role. National Care Standards were referenced as requiring to provide a consistent message.

- Revised risk assessment protocol to reflect "managed" but not "controlled" risk. Simplify the risk assessment process.

- Increased funding (including capital funding) for adaptations to facilitate outdoor access (such as changing windows into doors to the outdoors); grants for equipment such as wellies, play equipment, specialised buggies; funding for initiatives. The Big Lottery Fund example of the Play Ranger Model for Street Play sessions was given.

- Increased funding for higher staffing ratios with consideration given to the especial circumstances of children with disabilities.

- Enhanced opportunities for staff training in outdoor learning and Forest School training.

- Introduction of relevant modules into undergraduate and college courses to ensure that new staff come with a background knowledge in outdoor learning.

- Leadership from regulatory bodies with organisations such as the Care Inspectorate seen as having a role in raising expectations, for example, by including outdoor learning as a registration requirement.

- Local leadership from local authority "champions" or "outdoor learning officers".

Views on local approaches to supporting increased access

3.108 Respondents provided numerous practical suggestions, some based on experience, for how to support increased access to outdoor learning, exercise and play. Most frequently mentioned are below:

- Partner with local sports and physical activity providers to deliver activity in-house, to train staff, or to facilitate visits to local facilities.

- Engage with local active school co-ordinators.

- Educate and involve parents at every opportunity; encourage them to walk/cycle to the ELC setting and continue the outdoor approach at home.

- Ensure a supply of communal outdoor clothing for children and staff so no child is left out and provision is always at hand.

- Make outdoor space attractive and fun (e.g. playground paint; soft surfaces).

- Set up regular outdoor regimes – the "Daily Mile" was referenced; 10 minutes of outdoors after breaks; daily walks, and so on.

- Share facilities with other settings and with the community.

- Engage with community groups who can offer outdoor experiences such as allotment groups; farms; gardening clubs.

- Share good practice with others; hold joint training days across settings.

- Negotiate with local councils and community partnerships over subsidised transport to local outdoor facilities.

Views relating to Question 6 emerging from consultative events

3.109 There was much support for actions to be taken to increase access to outdoor learning, exercise and play, although challenges were identified, such as lack of space in urban areas. Mention was made of practical issues which could be addressed, such as making outdoor areas safer and ensuring the necessary equipment is available and staff are suitably trained to facilitate outdoor learning.

3.110 One group commented that outdoor activities may appeal more to a male workforce and could be a way of diversifying gender.

National Quality Standards and Inspection

The Scottish Government considers it important that accountability and scutiny arrangements are joined-up where possible to reduce unnecessary scrutiny. The two inspectorates, the Care Inspectorate and Education Scotland, have worked ever more closely together over recent years, conducting shared inspections, developing their Quality Frameworks to be more holistic in nature and collaborating on areas such as the inspection of childminders.

In the light of extension of funded ELC entitlement by 2020 it is timely to consider how to build on the work of the inspectorates to create a more streamlined and holistic system supporting quality improvement in ELC.

Question 7: How could accountability arrangements for early learning and childcare be improved?

3.111 222 respondents (66%) addressed this question.

3.112 A common view was that the sector is currently tightly regulated with the Care Inspectorate and Eduation Scotland comprising the two key regulators, and many national and local regulatory frameworks also applying, such as Environmental Health, National Care Standards and local authority protocol.

3.113 A dominant theme was the need to ensure accountability arrangements in future are streamlined, with consistent standards and indicators applying. Many respondents considered the merits of combining the Care Inspectorate and Education Scotland into one regulatory mechanism. The benefits of this were identified as: avoiding duplication; providing value for money; ensuring a consistent approach; minimising confusion; reducing bureaucracy; being proportionate; saving time; reducing pressure and stress; and being in-keeping with the intergrated model of provision.

3.114 In total, 38 respondents (including 20 local government respondents) clearly suggested taking the opportunity to combine the two regulatory regimes into one.

3.115 Several respondents referred simply to better streamlining of the separate regimes; 10 respondents (including the two regulatory bodies, a union and two

FE/HE establishments) specifically mentioned maintaining separate but complementary roles for the two key regulatory bodies in the future.

Views on current inspections

3.116 There was praise for the current focus on outcomes in inspections, in particular those by the Care Inspectorate. This was seen as ensuring systematic and robust inspection.

3.117 A recurring view, however, across several sectors was that lack of continuity between inspectors created inconsistency in views, with greater transparency and consistency requested. A few respondents suggested that those inspected should be able to hold the regulators to account for their inspections.

3.118 A view held by a small number of organisations, across a range of sectors, was that inspectors should be very highly qualified to do their job, including having relevant frontline experience. A few of the local government respondents proposed that joint inspections take place, involving local authority staff with local knowledge. Two respondents emphasised the need for Gaelic-speaking inspectors for Gaelic-medium schools.

3.119 There were mixed views on the frequency of inspections, with a small body of respondents suggesting that more frequent inspections should take place. A few requested more informal approaches whereby inspectors could be contacted inter-inspection for advice, or to showcase effective practice or improvements.

Views on local regulatory regimes

3.120 A recurring theme emerged around the benefits of local and continuous regulation. Local government respondents, in particular, highlighted possibilities of greater involvement in local hub models of inspection; inter-authority partnership scrutiny models; self-evaluation and reflective local models; and perhaps local childcare panels bringing children and parents together. Local scrutiny frameworks were viewed as having benefits of local knowledge and local tailoring of scrutiny, whilst taking advantage of national tools such as "How Good is our ELC".

3.121 A few respondents suggested greater involvement of parents and practitioners in providing open, honest feedback and being encouraged to raise concerns.

3.122 A small number of respondents considered that sharing good practice across local settings would help to cascade high standards of practice. Several individual respondents identified national structures such as a pay and conditions framework as setting common standards of practice as part of regulation.

3.123 The case of childminders was raised by a few respondents with the common view that they should be encompassed within the regulatory regime and should be assessed, as is the case for any other ELC provider.

Views relating to Question 7 emerging from consultative events

3.124 Participants requested greater stability in accountability arrangements, with some describing how changes in protocol create a burden of red-tape for local providers, who have to change their systems accordingly. Some perceived there to be a lack of consistency between local authorities in accountancy arrangements.

3.125 There was a call for more partnership and collaboration between local authorities and the third sector over accountability, with some form of an "alliance-contract" suggested.

3.126 A proposal emerged from one group for a ELC Centre of Excellence, with a remit for independent research, policy development and identification of what works.

4. Flexibility

A wider range of choice and options for parents and carers

Improving access to affordable ELC helps reduce barriers to participating in the labour market which parents and carers face. Building on existing and current flexible models of provision the expansion will support parents and carers in work, training or study. This will require patterns of provision that are better aligned with working patterns and diverse family needs.

Question 8: What factors must be considered in delivering flexible ELC provision, while continuing to ensure a high quality service? To what extent could funded ELC support parents and carers with non-standard working hours, such as working shifts and weekends?

4.1 291 respondents (87%) answered this question.

4.2 The predominant view was that the needs of the child should be at the centre when considering the delivery of flexible ELC provision. Whilst there was much support for enabling parents and carers to work or study, facilitated by more flexible ELC arrangements, the overarching view was that this should be balanced by ensuring that children are not disadvantaged through spending long hours in ELC settings. A few respondents considered that greater flexiblity of provision correlated with lower quality of ELC; some questioned whether increasing ELC flexibility to suit working parents and carers would contribute to giving children the best start in life:

> "The premise of this question puts the provision of childcare ahead of the needs of children" (Union).

4.3 Respondents generally associated flexible ELC with longer hours in ELC settings for children, and expressed concerns including:

- Children need stability in the ELC workforce to form attachments, but personnel will change due to shift changes over extended hours.
- Routines will be fragmented over longer hours, with children and workforce coming and going.
- By evening, children will be too tired to learn; quality of learning experience will be diminished.
- Long hours in ELC settings risks institutionalising children.
- Children are better off in their own homes in the evening, with childcare delivered there.

4.4 Several organisations suggested that expanding to 1140 hours comprises sufficient challenge without also trying to provide greater flexibility of take-up of

hours. One private nursery commented that attempting this was akin to "running before you can walk".

4.5 A small number of respondents, both organisations and individuals, considered that the aims of increased and greater flexibility of hours should be looked at alongside the ethos of giving children the best start in life, in a strategic fashion. They suggested questions should be asked such as, what is the overall aim?; how will increased and flexible hours achieve this?; will both learning and childcare functions be met?; and what will the ELC workforce look like to deliver what is required?

4.6 Several respondents requested that national limits are set on the number of hours and the level of flexibility which can be offered to parents, in order to safeguard the child and also to promote consistency across local authority areas.

Views on factors to be considered in delivering flexible ELC provision

4.7 In addition to concerns over children's wellbeing, offering flexible ELC was envisaged as potentially impacting on the **ELC workforce** in the following ways:

- Reducing work-life balance due to having to work hours no longer suited to their own family life.
- Undermining Fair Work practices.
- Reducing opportunities for group training.
- Lowering staff morale.
- Increasing staff turnover.
- Lowering the status of the job with focus shifting away from early learning to caring.

4.8 Many respondents envisaged challenges for **ELC settings**:

- Administratively: managing different shifts; anti-social hours cover; different pay rates for routine and premium hours; changing requests of parents working different weekly patterns.
- Some ELC providers rent space in buildings used for other purposes and will be unable to increase hours and flexibility.
- Parents' expectations of ELC flexibility may need managing as every family cannot have individually tailored provision.
- Staffing will need to increase to cover all hours offered and longer shifts.
- Provision will need to focus more on care in terms of quality sleeping and eating areas and nutritional meal content. More toileting facilities may be needed.
- Increasing flexibility for parents will impact negatively on the flexibility which can be offered to ELC staff.
- Greater flexibility over drop-off and collection times is disruptive and will be expensive and difficult to manage.

- Hard to find economies of scale and savings in the context of offering more flexibility of provision.

- Staff need to have safe and reliable transport to get to and from the ELC setting outwith usual daily hours and this could prove difficult using public transport.

4.9 **Other challenges** were identified with the most frequently mentioned being:

- Rural areas, where respondents stated that it was challenging to procure providers for standard hours, never mind increased and flexible hours. Communities are scattered; transport sometimes limited; and parents have longer travel to work time.

- Where children have specific needs, these will need to be catered for within the flexibility package, with Gaelic-medium provision and ASN both identified in this regard.

- Patterns of childcare and parent/carer working, set up using increased and flexible provision, will be disrupted when the child goes to school.

- Parents will have to be charged higher rates for some hours; they may end up committing to and paying for hours they then do not need if their working pattern changes, for example if they are on variable hour contracts.

Views on how funded ELC could support parents and carers with non-standard working hours

4.10 Despite much concern over the perceived challenges to the proposal, many respondents provided views on how best to make it work. The following suggestions were most common:

Blended package at local level

4.11 Most of those who commented envisaged more flexible ELC combining group and individual setting provision within a local community, with childminders mentioned frequently as having the experience and flexibility to contribute to the overall package. Nannies and family members such as grandparents were also identified as potentially contributing, in a paid capacity.

4.12 This model was viewed as providing consistency and stability at group setting level (benefitting the child and the ELC provider) whilst injecting individually tailored flexibility through childminding services (benefiting the child and the parents).

Employers/Colleges to be more flexible

4.13 There was some support for employers to be more responsible for promoting family-friendly policies so as to reduce the need for parents/carers to require such flexibility in ELC. Standard working patterns with good notice of change and standard hour contracts were suggested as helping parents plan their requirements. Greater provision of distance and e-learning by FE/HE establishments was envisaged as helping to reduce need for flexible ELC.

4.14 A few respondents suggested that large employers, such as NHS hospitals, should consider workplace ELC provision tailored around the needs of their workforce.

Increased Scottish Government funding

4.15 A common view was that increasing ELC flexibility will require increased funding for this sector from the Scottish Government to cover: higher rates of pay for unsocial hours; more staff; adaptations to premises, e.g. for more bathrooms, eating areas; more meal provision; inefficiencies inherent in such provision, such as over-staffing at times.

Review pay and conditions frameworks for ELC workforce

4.16 Many respondents considered that pay and conditions will need reviewed in order to accommodate more regular requirements for different shift patterns including non-standard hours, weekends and school holiday periods.

4.17 Some respondents identified teacher and janitorial staff as also potentially affected should school premises be deployed for flexible hour provision, with the need for their terms and conditions to be reviewed accordingly.

Nature of staffing

4.18 A few respondents suggested that the profile of staff required to work within the context of more flexible ELC provision may change to reflect more mature and experienced personnel, and increasing ratios of experienced staff to less experienced. It was also suggested that longer and more flexible hours may put more focus on outdoor learning and also attract more men into the profession, due to the higher and more stable wage on offer.

Learn from others

4.19 Respondents considered that lessons could be learned from current private and third sector providers who already operate flexibly; from research and experience in other countries; and from listening to parents and finding out from them what their needs are and barriers to accessing provision.

Help with administration from Scottish Government

4.20 Suggestions were made that the Scottish Government could develop electronic management systems purpose-made for logging workforce hours and invoicing.

Views relating to Question 8 emerging from consultative events

4.21 There was much agreement that currently parents are not offered much flexibility from ELC settings, particularly from local authority providers, to meet their needs around work and study. One impact of this is children receiving ELC across different settings within one day, which was not perceived as beneficial for child or parent. Support for more flexible ELC provision was notably higher in the consultation events where attendees were predominantly parents.

4.22 Some participants welcomed more flexible provision in their local area, such as school breakfast clubs, which had enabled them to have earlier work start times.

Question 9: How can we ensure fair and sustainable funding for all providers offering the ELC entitlement?

4.23 239 respondents (71%) answered this question.

4.24 A common view was that fair funding involved increasing the current funding provision from the Scottish Government to a level sufficient to fund the expansion of ELC and costs associated with this, such as adaptations.

4.25 Most of those who commented considered that levels of funding for individual establishments should reflect local and provider circumstances, including extra costs of rural settings; providing for ASN; deprivation; different levels of rental rates; and so on. A recurring comment was, "No one size fits all".

4.26 A repeated view, particularly amongst local government respondents, was that funding for partner providers should depend on their commitment to paying the Living Wage to their workforce. Some respondents suggested building in other requirements to the provision of funding to partner providers, such as developing outdoor space, or providing Gaelic-medium.

4.27 There was some concern over the accountability of local authorities in passing on funding to partner providers with suggestions for: ring fencing this allocation; implementing a national standard sum (perhaps re-introducing the previous Advisory Floor) to be paid to all providers; and making local authorities more accountable for how they have used the funds for ELC.

4.28 An emerging theme amongst private and third sector providers and individuals was for funds to "follow the child" and be given directly to parents, possible in voucher form, for purchase of ELC provision.

4.29 A small number of respondents, largely private sector providers, suggested that funds for ELC provision come directly from Scottish Government to providers.

4.30 There was some appetite, largely amongst individual respondents, for national pay scales across all providers.

4.31 Several respondents, including unions, considered that fair and sustainable funding for providers offering the ELC entitlement would be more likely if there was a universal service of provision, state run, in the not-for-profit sector.

4.32 A few respondents considered that guidance would be helpful on procuring ELC services; others suggested learning from other jurisdictions or closer to home, from the recent national Care Home contract.

4.33 A few respondents, largely private sector providers, re-iterated their proposal for reduced VAT and business rates in order to free up funding for Fair Wages.

Views relating to Question 9 emerging from consultative events

4.34 Very little discussion related directly to this question. There was some concern in one group, however, that local authorities are not passing on adequate funding to partner providers from their allocation for ELC.

> **Potential for an enhanced role for Childminders**
>
> There are around 5,600 childminders in Scotland, caring for over 31,000 children. The Scottish Government considers that childminders have a potential key role in expanded funded provision, especially for younger children.
>
> This could be through, for example, increased use of "blended models of ELC" which involve children spending time in both a nursery setting and with a childminder.
>
> As part of the Scottish Government's work to strengthen the role of childminders, they are working with partners to develop and publish, in autumn 2017, a new learning and development pathway for childminders to ensure best practice in the profession.

Question 10: What more can we do to promote and support the involvement of childminders in the entitlement to ELC? What are the barriers, if any, to becoming a childminder? How can we ensure quality while preserving the unique value of home-based care?

4.35 237 respondents (70%) answered this question.

Views on what can be done to promote and support the involvement of childminders in the entitlement to ELC

4.36 There was much cross-sector support for childminders being involved in the entitlement to ELC.

4.37 In terms of **promotion of childminders**, many considered that parents, in particular, needed to be educated on the benefits of childminders and that this mode of delivery of ELC is an option. A small number of respondents suggested that local authorities may also need educating on this.

4.38 A national recruitment and publicity campaign focusing on childminders was recommended by several individuals and a few local government respondents. Information distributed locally on childminders and the services they provide was suggested by a small number of individuals.

4.39 It was envisaged that the SCMA and the Care Inspectorate could both play a part in promoting childminders within the context of the entitlement to ELC.

4.40 To **support the involvement of childminders** the most common view across a range of sectors, was that they should be part of a blended model of ELC provision, linked to local early years' establishments, and benefiting from joint training opportunities and support from both local authority and partner provider organisations.

4.41 A few individual respondents suggested that under a "funding following the child" model of funding, parents may be more likely to deploy childminders when choosing a package of ELC for their children.

4.42 To further support childminders, local government respondents in particular were in favour of the creation of support networks, such as peer group childminding networks, and the introduction of childminder support officers within local authorities.

Views on the barriers to becoming a childminder

4.43 The most frequently mentioned barrier was too much paperwork and bureaucracy.

4.44 Other common barriers identified were:

- Costs of adaptations to home environment/start-up costs/registration costs.
- Low pay; fluctuations in pay; late payers.
- Scrutiny process (although this was mentioned by local government more than childminders themselves).

4.45 Other barriers less frequently mentioned were: accessing training; poor status in society; isolation; loss of space in family home; and poor transport in rural areas.

Views on how to ensure quality

4.46 Views revolved around ensuring quality by:

- Inspection regimes.
- Registration and accreditation.
- Training opportunities and qualifications.

Inspection regimes

4.47 A common view was that childminders should be subject to the same rigorous and regular inspection regimes as other providers of ELC. The Care Inspectorate was mentioned as appropriate in this regard, with respondents from a range of sectors envisaging standards and performance indicators being applied to childminders, just as they are to others.

4.48 A national inspection and improvement body made reference to "How good is our early learning and childcare?[4]" framework for self-improvement, with a local authority emphasising the need to promote self-evaluation materials amongst childminders.

Registration and accreditation

4.49 A common view across sectors was that childminders should be required to register with the SSSC.

4.50 It was noted by national inspection and improvement bodies that Education Scotland is working with stakeholder organisations, including the Care Inspectorate and SCMA, to develop a quality assurance model for childminder settings where children's entitlement to ELC is being delivered.

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[4] https://education.gov.scot/improvement/Documents/Frameworks_SelfEvaluation/FRWK1_NIHedit Self-evaluationHGIELC/HGIOELC020316Revised.pdf

4.51 One individual, who identified as being a childminder, requested a structure of accreditation which could demonstrate learning and experience, to help differentiate between the expertise of different childminders.

Training opportunities and qualifications

4.52 A recurring theme focused around creating more opportunities for childminders to train and learn. Accessibility, affordability and provision of relevant courses were all raised as challenges. Both formal and informal learning mechanisms were identified as important, from mandatory training modules, to sharing best practice across networks.

4.53 An example was provided of Ayrshire College which, with support from North Ayrshire Council, was delivering twilight classes for childminders.

4.54 A common view to emerge across several sectors was that childminders should be expected to have gained an appropriate qualification, but agreement was needed on the level of this. One third sector and voluntary organisation respondent remarked that childminders will be more likely to stay in the sector once they have invested in achieving a qualification.

Views relating to Question 10 emerging from consultative events

4.55 Various challenges for childminders were identified such as too much paperwork; onerous regulatory regimes; inconsistent income; set up and running costs; access to training; complex and time-consuming procedures, such as initial PVG clearance.

4.56 It was felt that childminders should be subject to the same regulations and standards as other ELC practitioners.

4.57 Many benefits of childminders were identified for the ELC sector, such as: provision of continuity for children; provision of wraparound care; suitable for blended models of provision; and expertise in providing ELC for two year olds.

5. Accessibility

The Scottish Government considers that ELC provision must be delivered in a way that ensures equality of access and accounts for the varying needs of all children. These needs can vary depending on a number of factors, including whether a child is disabled or has ASN, is from an ethnic minority background, or lives in a deprived area.

Question 11: How do we ensure that the voice of children and their families is heard as we plan this expansion?

5.1 291 respondents (87%) answered this question.

General views

5.2 There was widespread agreement that the views of children and their families should be heard and taken into account throughout the planning of the expansion. A recurring view was that the views of future users of ELC services should also be sought; one respondent emphasised that the ELC workforce should also be encouraged to provide views.

5.3 Many respondents across several sectors highlighted what they saw as the need for special efforts to be made to ensure the voices are heard of those with communication difficulties; people with physical disabilities; minority ethnic communities; those living in rural areas; people on low income; and not the usual suspects, nor only those who shout loudest.

5.4 A key theme was that running alongside consultation should be a programme of education and information, so that parents, current and future, are informed about the expansion and its implications and relevance for them. Promotion via national TV and radio, media (including social media), Baby Boxes, campaigns, publications including leaflets; posters; and allied professionals such as health visitors, were identified as having potential to inform and educate.

5.5 Whilst some respondents clearly envisaged national programmes of consultation and communication, others foresaw local consultative initiatives taking place, with local views sought on local needs and provision. Accordingly, some respondents considered that the Scottish Government would take the lead in seeking views; others perceived local authorities or regulators would have this responsibility; and many respondents clearly envisaged consultation taking place within settings, undertaken by providers or visiting professionals.

5.6 A few respondents identified current frameworks and guidance within which the voices of children and families should be heard. Several commented that there is a legal requirement for local authorities to consult parents in order to increase flexibility and choice over how funded hours are accessed; one national inspection and improvement body highlighted community empowerment legislation and standards as underpinning community consultation; a third Sector and voluntary organisation respondent suggested that the Scottish Government should add a

core activity to its 1140 expansion programme – national, on-going and independent engagement with children and their families.

5.7 A clear expectation emerged of continuous consultation with children and families rather than one-off exercises. Frameworks to facilitate this were identified: partnership working across ELC settings between providers and families; opportunities for open dialogue between parents/carers and providers; close working between allied professionals such as health visitors, social workers, and providers; and frequent visits to settings by regulatory and inspector bodies.

Suggestions for consultative mechanisms

5.8 Numerous suggestions were made for ways to seek views of families. The most commonly mentioned were:

- "Consultation".
- Ongoing, informal dialogue within ELC settings between parents/carers and providers; face-to-face communication.
- Questionnaires/surveys.
- Using social media (Twitter; Facebook; Survey Monkey; online surveys; online forums).
- Focus groups.
- Local parent panels; workshops; meetings; information sessions; local childminder forums.
- Through feedback from trials of different delivery models (such as the current trials).
- A user-friendly version of consultations like this one.
- Allied professionals such as health visitors to serve as conduits to providing information and collecting information.
- Officials to spend time in ELC settings, observing and communicating with children and families.
- Community-led events involving third sector organisations; Local Health and Social Care Partnerships.

Views on how best to hear children's voices

5.9 There was general recognition that whilst children's voices should be heard in planning the expansion, extra measures may need to be taken to ensure they are able to provide views effectively.

5.10 A few respondents suggested topics on which children's views are particularly helpful: planning and use of outdoor space; mealtimes; play time; boundaries and relationships with other children.

5.11 A small number of respondents remarked that childminders are adept at hearing children's voices, regularly seeking their input and acting on this. Others suggested a variety of approaches to ensuring the voice of children is heard:

- Mosaic approach (established multi-method approach) to listening to young children
- Using specialists to gather the information required
- Get advice from organisations such as "Investors in Children"
- Using and analysing video footage
- Games and puppets
- Mind maps
- Deploying trusted people such as key workers to listen to children and record views
- Leave it to the inspectors

Views relating to Question 11 emerging from consultative events

5.12 This topic was not covered in depth in consultative events. Only one group identified a need for early engagement with parents, perhaps through health visitors.

Question 12: How can we ensure equality of access for all children? What barriers do children with disabilities and ASN currently face in accessing ELC? What further action is required to address these barriers?

5.13 261 respondents (78%) answered this question.

5.14 Views focused largely around barriers faced in accessing ELC and action required to address these. Overall, respondents associated greater barriers and the need for further action with partner providers rather than amongst local authority providers.

5.15 There were mixed views on whether children with severe disabilities and ASN should be included in mainstream ELC. The majority view was in favour of inclusion, although there was also support for blended models of provision, whereby children have additional specialist help in dedicated settings, perhaps with regular visits to mainstream ELC settings.

Views on barriers children with disabilities and ASN face in accessing ELC

5.16 Many respondents, across a wide range of sectors, identified what they perceived to be current barriers:

Barriers relating to infrastructure/physical environment

- Inadequate physical accessibility (e.g. steps down to poorly lit basement).
- Geographical access/poor transport .

Barriers relating to staffing

- Ratios of staff to children inadequate.

- Declining numbers of specialist staff, e.g. speech therapists.
- Lack of knowledge amongst staff.
- Lack of availability of appropriate training.
- Lack of funding for upskilling staff.

Barriers relating to knowledge

- Lack of awareness in families of their child's needs and the help available.
- Lack of detail available on future funding models for local authorities.

Barriers relating to administration

- Delayed identification of child's needs.
- Inadequate cross-border communication and working.
- Lack of continuity from pre-school to primary school settings.
- Time needed to put the required measures in place.

Others

- Conflict of interest with commercial decision-making process.
- Additional costs for parents in finding the appropriate specialist care.
- Additional issues if parents also have disabilities.
- Additional issues if English is not the parents'/child's first language.

Views on further action required to address the barriers

5.17 Four actions were identifed most frequently:

Additional funding

5.18 The most frequently identified action to address the barriers envisaged was extra funding for greater levels of staffing; adaptations to physical structures; specialist equipment; and staff training.

Additional staffing

5.19 Respondents identified the need for much higher staff to child ratios, and one-to-one provision in some circumstances, in order to support the needs of children with disabilities and ASN.

5.20 Specialist staffing was also viewed as crucial, with speech therapists mentioned most frequently, but also physiotherapists, educational psychologists and personnel skilled in working in this field.

Specialist training for staff

5.21 A common theme was that the ELC workforce will require specialist training in order to provide support for children with disabilities and ASN.

5.22 Topics for training were suggested and included: how to identify ASN and disability; inclusion and anti-discriminatory practices; attachment; medication; dietary requirements and nutrition; coping with seizures; British Sign Lanuage; dealing with cathetors; and autism.

5.23 A few respondents from different sectors considered that staff who attend courses and gain experience in this field should be recognised with some form of accreditation to distinguish them and incentivise their progress.

Changes to ELC setting infrastructure

5.24 There were repeated calls for the infrastructure of ELC settings to be reviewed to ensure they are fit for the purpose of admitting children with disabilities and ASN. Many respondents suggested that changes will be needed such as the installation of ramps for wheelchairs and wider doorways.

5.25 Local Government respondents in particular identified the need to consider transport access within future planning. Several respondents considered that specifications for provision for children with disabilities and ASN should be integral to the design for all new build provision.

5.26 Actions identified less frequently were:

- Positive action and outreach work to raise awareness of entitlement to free ELC hours amongst families with children with disability and ASN. GPs, Health Visitors, charities and support groups were all mentioned as possible avenues.
- Strengthen multi-disciplinary working between local authorities, partner providers, parents and support professions such as health, social work, education.
- Streamlining the identification of needs; making the process more efficient and timely.
- Establishing equipment "banks" from which specialist equipment can be borrowed by providers then returned when no longer needed.

5.27 Actions mentioned by only a few respondents included:
- Make disability and ASN provision by partner providers part of the commissioning and registration process.
- Make use of valuable projects, initiatives and guidance such as "ENABLE U"; and the Enquire website provided by Children in Scotland.
- Consider hub provision across a local area with clusters of providers sharing specialist help.
- Change the mindsets of the ELC workforce to one of inclusion and mainstreaming.
- Consider developing specialist childminders to be part of blended models of provision for children with disabilities and ASN.

Views relating to Question 12 emerging from consultative events

5.28 Participants considered that children with disabilities and ASN and their families may need more support from ELC staff which will require more investment to ensure higher ratios of staffing to children. Greater investment was also identified for specialised adaptations and equipment.

Question 13: How can we support higher take-up rates amongst eligible two year olds and other groups less likely to access entitlement?

5.29 266 respondents (79%) answered this question.

Views on the promotion of the entitlement

5.30 The most common response was that the entitlement should be promoted widely using many different channels. Health visitors were identified by over a quarter of respondents who addressed the question as key to informing families about the entitlement and how to access it. Both social workers and GPs were also identified frequently as having important roles in promoting the entitlement. Other possible avenues mentioned by at least four respondents were: social media; voluntary and other related organisations; Department for Work and Pensions; allied professionals such as the health servivce; information in Baby Boxes; in testimonials from those who have taken up the entitlement successfully; and in leaflets handed out to parents/carers at schools.

5.31 A recurring theme was for the production and distribution of simple guidance on the entitlement, in plain English, with reassurance about issues which may concern potential users, such as whether they will lose other benefits if they take-up the entitlement.

5.32 A few respondents across several different categories suggested that consultation with parents/carers should be undertaken to identify potential barriers to take-up.

Views on identifying those to whom the entitlement applies

5.33 Some respondents addressed the issue of how parents/carers within scope for the entitlement could be identified. The following suggestions were made in order from most to least mentioned:

- Health Visitors to identify.
- Department of Work and Pensions to identify and share data.
- Through inter-agency working, including across local authority boundaries.

Views on ensuring a holistic approach is achieved

5.34 Many respondents supported the concept of provision of holistic delivery models, which support families as a whole in family learning and childcare. Family Learning Centre models were welcomed as providing the opportunity to co-locate

ELC with other support services such as community learning, adult education, and parenting classes.

5.35 A repeated theme was that for children of such young age, greater flexibility over encouraging parents/carers to "stay and play" should be promoted, with drop-in days involving entire families and other family-oriented initiatives supported.

5.36 Practical ideas for encouraging families to take up the entitlement were suggested with the most frequently mentioned being: greater flexibility over hours of provision; help with application form filling; help with transport to centres (particularly if they are centralised in hubs); and provision of free meals.

Views on promoting equity of provision

5.37 One theme emerging largely from individuals and third sector organisations was that the entitlement should be universal, rather than targeted at vulnerable two year olds. The word "vulnerable" was suggested as possibly stigmatising, with some requesting that the entitlement be re-branded to avoid this.

5.38 A recurring theme was that with greater funding from Scottish Government, a universal entitlement could be promoted across all providers, not just local authorities.

Views opposing the proposal

5.39 A small but significant number of respondents stated their opposition to the proposal on the grounds that children of this age would be better supported at home or in very small groups.

5.40 Some respondents, including a mix of individuals and organisations, suggested that childminders could be explored as viable options for delivering the entitlement, particularly in rural areas where they may offer more local solutions. Others considered that parent and toddler groups, and blended home and small group settings, may be more appropriate for vulnerable two year olds than larger, institutional settings.

Views relating to Question 13 emerging from consultative events

5.41 Some concern was expressed over the appropriateness of two year olds spending long hours in ELC settings.

5.42 Questions were raised over rules of eligibility and suggestions made that parents/carers may find it difficult to understand whether their child is eligible, particuarly if they are illiterate and/or are not in contact with a health visitor. It was considered that the eligibility criteria may need to be reviewed to meet needs more appropriately.

5.43 One parent already receiving the entitlement described the stigma attached to taking up the provision.

Question 14: How can more social enterprises and third sector providers be encouraged to enter the ELC sector?

5.44 182 respondents (54%) answered this question.

5.45 A recurring view, particularly amongst local government respondents, was that entering the ELC sector could be challenging for these bodies, in particular in terms of resourcing; fluctuations in the population and in the personnel required; attracting volunteers; ensuring suitable premises; and ensuring legislative requirements are fulfilled. It was expected that the same standards of quality and staff qualifications would be required as of any other sector.

5.46 By far the most common response was that sustainable and appropriate levels of funding for social enterprises and third sector providers will be needed in order to encourage them to enter the ELC sector. Revenue and capital funding were identified as needed for start-up adaptations to premises and longer term running costs. Sustainable funding was viewed as enabling longer-term planning and supporting growth and quality provision.

5.47 A few respondents suggested "incentives" with a few specifying tax incentives as a means of encouragement.

5.48 Whilst a some respondents recommended that broad "support" is required to encourage more social enterprises and third sector providers into the ELC sector, others were more specific about the support needed:
- Clear guidance on protocols such as how to register; regulations; and so on, with bodies such as the National Day Nurseries Association providing information and support.
- Local authorities to support through dedicated officers who provide guidance.
- Training support, perhaps free, perhaps in conjunction with other providers.
- Business support, with advice on business models; setting up; accountability; plans.
- Reduction in bureaucracy; simplifying procedures such as the tendering model.

5.49 Another theme was that by promoting the value of ELC provision and the potential for social enterprises and third sector providers within this sector, this would serve as a carrot to encourage these bodies into the ELC sector. Local government and individual respondents in particular suggested much more awareness raising, using evidence from existing examples and pilots, supported by publicity and sharing of good practice.

5.50 Greater strategic and joined-up planning and operation were suggested by several respondents across a range of sectors. Many suggestions were made for sharing resources across providers; co-locating social enterprise and third sector provision with schools; integrating planning of provision by these sectors within overall Community Planning.

5.51 Opposition to expansion of ELC using social enterprises and third sector providers came from unions and further and higher education establishments in particular, who considered that local authorities may be better placed to deliver expanded hours whilst ensuring quality of provision.

Views relating to Question 14 emerging from consultative events

5.52 Participants envisaged an increased role for the third sector in entering the ELC sector. Access to training was identified as a challenge with one group suggesting Intermediate Labour Market projects as relevant, which support and mentor people into careers in the ELC sector.

Question 15: How can the governance arrangements support more community-led ELC provision particularly in remote and rural areas?

5.53 167 respondents (50%) answered this question.

5.54 There was general agreement that the regulatory regime is demanding for community volunteers who may not have appropriate training, but are nonetheless required to meet rigorous regulations with associated responsibilities. An example was provided of management group meetings for community-led providers gradually shifting in emphasis from fundraising to concentrating increasingly on regulations and employment issues.

5.55 Two key themes emerged: providing professional support to community-led enterprises; and relaxing governance arrangements to accommodate this sector.

Views on providing professional support

5.56 Many respondents envisaged models of provision whereby national and regional bodies provide support and professional guidance to community-led ELC providers to facilitate their working within the current governance arrangements.

5.57 Suggestions focused around dedicated officers, perhaps based within local authorities and/or umbrella organisations, providing tailored advice and support to local groups. The Care and Learning Alliance was mentioned in this respect, as was One Parent Families Scotland and Early Years Scotland. The possibility of more established providers supporting several inexperienced, local, community-led providers was put forward.

5.58 Areas in which support could be of significant benefit were identified as: employing and managing staff; accounting; leading and contributing personnel at management group meetings. Committee meetings were mentioned frequently as challenging in terms of ensuring the continuing presence of suitably experienced and knowledgeable members, due to parent volunteers moving on as their children get older, and lack of expertise.

5.59 The potential for use of peripatetic professional managers was raised by a few respondents, as was enlisting the involvement of local business and enterprise bodies.

Views on relaxing governance arrangements

5.60 Many suggestions were made for amendments to current regulations in order to facilitate the establishment and sustainability of community-led ELC provision. Respondents requested the following be reviewed:

- The period of operation before organisations can apply for partner-provider status.
- Regulations on minimum number of children eligible for funded ELC.
- Number of funded places local authorities can offer.
- Categories of care service (suggested that these no longer represent modern ways of providing ELC).
- Care Inspectorate requirements.
- SSSC requirements.
- Health and safety requirements.

5.61 A local authority suggested that external inspectors will need to gain understanding of the wide variety of provider models in local communities; an individual emphasised their view that inspections should be proportionate to the size of the service.

Other relevant views

5.62 A few respondents (unions and local government) opposed the emphasis on community-led ELC provision within the context of expansion of ELC entitlement.

5.63 A small number of respondents, across a range of sectors, envisaged a wide variety of provision emerging, including mobile delivery of ELC, greater use of childminders working independently or in clusters, and forest nurseries, with governance needing to keep abreast of such developments, in terms of relevance and flexibility.

Question 16: How can the broader system for promoting, accessing, and registering for a place in an ELC setting be improved? Please give examples of any innovative and accessible systems currently in place.

5.64 179 respondents (53%) answered this question.

5.65 There was a wide variety of view reflecting varied levels of understanding of current systems and practices. Overall, however, there was agreement that systems needed to be made simpler, more streamlined, and less confusing for parents/carers. A few organisations called for greater consistency in approach across and within local authorities.

5.66 Views on how best to **promote** ELC provision overlapped considerably with those given in response to question 13. In particular, health visitors were identified repeatedly as potential providers of information, in addition to GPs, local and

national television and printed and social media. The notion of a comprehensive, online source of information on providers (a "one stop shop" concept) was suggested by a few respondents. The websites of the National Childcare Information Service and SCMA, in addition to Education Scotland's Parentzone Scotland website, were identified as useful for promotional purposes.

5.67 There were mixed views on the appropriateness of **accessing** entitlement and **registering** for a place online (suggested in the consultation document). Whilst benefits were envisaged for some parents, many respondents felt uneasy about relying on this without offering other avenues such as face-to-face and hard copy forms for those without digital access. A recurring view was that some parents will need direct help with form filling, with health visitors and social workers identified as assisting in this task.

5.68 A few respondents across several sectors suggested that multiple pathways to registering should be offered, using different settings and modes. Several local authorities, whilst welcoming this approach, emphasised that this should be supported by a centralised system of allocating entitlement, for monitoring purposes and to keep track of uptake and trends.

5.69 A repeated view was that NAMS should be developed to make it fit for purpose for the demands of expanded hours entitlement. Several respondents identified the need for national systems of both data storing and automatic triggering of alerts, to highlight families coming within scope of the entitlement. For this to happen, it was envisaged that data-sharing protocols should be addressed to enable key data such as dates of birth and contact details to be shared across relevant bodies. A few respondents proposed that special requests, such as the need for Gaelic-medium provision, could be attached to databases, to be included in automatic alerts.

5.70 The theme of family-centred, as opposed to service-centred approaches, emerged amongst private sector providers and third sector and voluntary organisations in particular:

> "The system should be parent/family centred, not service centred. Currently local authorities generally make an offer with their own provision and use partner provider settings to meet any shortfalls expecting parents to fit in with the offer, rather than parents designing the ELC package that meets their child and family needs." (Third Sector and Voluntary Organisation)

5.71 The notion of "ELC brokerage officers" was put forward by a few respondents, envisaging brokers matching families and places on an individual basis to meet needs. Alerting and placing children by age and stage rather than by fixed entry dates in ELC settings was proposed as another measure centred around the child. A few respondents expressed their support for a move towards ELC accounts which they considered would be transformational for parents, giving them real choice and control over their child's ELC provision, simplifying the registration process and reducing administration costs for all.

5.72 Various practical measures were suggested for improving the current systems. These included all-year entry and registration to avoid peaks in form-filling activity at set times of the year; wider and more accessible provision of registration forms at places frequented by families, such as GP surgeries, parent and toddler groups; open days at ELC settings in which families with children coming up to eligibility can access face-to-face help with filling in hard copy forms; greater involvement of local support organisations, to provide clear information to families. The Glasgow Family Information Service was identified as a good example in this regard.

5.73 There was support from across several sectors for ensuring linkages between relevant electronic systems. In particular, it was suggested that the system for applying for ELC entitlement should be linked with the school place application system; ELC accounts should link with broader social security processes; and NAMS could usefully link with broader invoicing systems.

Views relating to Question 16 emerging from consultative events

5.74 Very little comment was made relating to this question. One group suggested that local authorities should stop capping places in their own settings and ensure funding is passed on to partner providers so that they can offer provision. Participants considered that parents need more choice in accessing provision in locations to suit their requirements.

6. Affordability

The two key aspects to affordability are: the costs faced by parents and carers; and the costs to the public sector of delivering the overall system.

On top of the free hours to ELC entitlement, parents may require additional hours from their ELC provider. For some on low incomes, costs such as initial deposits and administration fees, can provide a barrier to participating in the labour market or in further or higher education.

Question 17: Do parents and carers face any barriers in accessing support with the costs of ELC provision (beyond funded entitlement)? What more can we do to ensure additional hours are affordable?

6.1 238 respondents (71%) answered this question.

General views

6.2 Many respondents identified challenges to parents in funding additional hours, with much reference made to the situation of low-income working families, who may not be entitled to various benefits, yet still face costs of additional hours and sometimes inflexible childcare provision which do not fit with their working patterns.

6.3 A few respondents identified the wider context of welfare reform and pay and conditions of the workforce as playing major roles in promoting affordability of ELC provision.

Views on accessing support with the costs of ELC provision beyond funded entitlement

6.4 The most common view was that the tax and social security systems which could provide help to those facing financial barriers, are complex and difficult to understand. Many respondents, from a wide range of sectors, considered that awareness raising, and help with understanding the financial assistance on offer through the tax and social security systems, would support parents in accessing ELC provision beyond funded entitlement.

6.5 Students in further and higher education were highlighted by a few respondents as requiring specific advice on what financial support is available and how to access it.

6.6 A few respondents from the third and voluntary sectors commented that some parents do not take up benefits and tax credits for fear of subsequent claw-back.

6.7 Other relevant suggestions included the need to make the tax credit scheme more efficient to avoid what some had experienced as delays following application; and fine-tuning entitlement to financial support for specific cases such as travelling

communitites; carers; parents whose children have disabilities and/or ASNs; and childminders whose own children take up their places.

Views on what more can be done to ensure additional hours are affordable

6.8 Three main actions were identified: charge less; charge the same, but make it easier to pay; charge the same but provide help with associated costs.

Views on ways to charge less

6.9 The key way to charge parents less for additional hours was seen as the Scottish Government subsidising costs by providing greater funding for ELC to local authorities and this being passed on to partner providers. Individual respondents and private sector providers expressed most support for this. It was considered that by reducing ELC costs, parents would be more incentivised to take up work, thereby reducing costs to the benefit system in due course.

6.10 A few respondents supported the introduction of means-testing as a way to establish costs for additional hours in a more equitable manner.

6.11 A small number of respondents considered that a fee cap on additional hour costs based on a proportion of the household income could work to make additional hours more affordable.

6.12 A recurring view was that discounts should be given where many additional hours were required, or where several children from the same household were in need of additional hours.

Views on ways to make it easier to pay

6.13 It was commonly felt that allowing flexibility into the payment schedule for the deposit and regular payments would go some way to helping with budgeting for costs.

6.14 Several respondents from a range of sectors considered that paying for additional hours directly from salary or benefits would help prevent families using funds meant for ELC for other things.

6.15 The notion of funds for ELC being amalgamated into ELC accounts attracted some support from a few organisations. This was seen as simplifying payments for parents in helping them to budget.

Views on ways to provide help with costs

6.16 The additional, sometimes hidden costs of ELC provision, were identified and included: transport to the provider; outdoor clothing; meals and snacks; and so on. Individual respondents, in particular, suggested that help could be provided to parents in the form of subsidised or free transport, lunches and clothing grants.

6.17 A few organisations re-iterated previous comments about providers adopting strategies to ensure equitable access to their facilities, such as providing outdoor clothing such as wellies to avoid additional costs for parents.

6.18 A recurring view was that employers and further and higher educational establishments could do more to support parents with ELC costs, for example, through childcare vouchers.

Views relating to Question 17 emerging from consultative events

6.19 Discussion focused around low paid work and the challenges this created to affording ELC provision. One participant welcomed the help that working tax credits had given her in this regard.

6.20 Some participants suggested that greater funding from local authorities to partner providers would help with affordability.

> **Ensuring the long-term sustainability of the ELC sector**
>
> It is vital that the overall ELC sector is sustainable over the long-term, has appropriate capacity, and allows for diversity in providers across the public, private and third sector, as well as a wide range of innovative delivery models.

Question 18: How can ELC providers, particularly private and third sector providers, be encouraged to extend capacity?

6.21 216 respondents (64%) answered this question. A recurring view was that quality of provision should not be compromised in efforts to expand quantity of provision. Another repeated view was that some provision cannot be expanded, for example, where premises are shared with others and are at maximum capacity already.

6.22 The most common view, expressed across a wide range of sectors, was that to encourage private and third sector providers to extend their capacity, more funding will be required for these providers. Whilst many respondents identified "funding" as needed, others specified the need for sustainable, longer-term resourcing for increased staffing; paying Living Wages; additional training; and capital investment for adaptations to premises and new builds. A few respondents envisaged grants with 0% interest to support expansion; others identified financial "incentives" as important, with some mentioning reductions in business rate tax, for example.

6.23 Several respondents remarked that without longer-term security of funding, inward investment and loans from financial institutions would be harder to achieve. Several local authorities emphasised the need for early clarity on funding and timescales for the expansion, in order to assist with planning.

6.24 Another significant theme was the need for providers in clustered areas to work in partnership, collaboratively, strategically, using local information on current and future needs to come up with joint solutions for expansion. Local authorities in particular, favoured this strategic approach which they felt would make best use of resources and avoid duplicated effort. A few third sector and voluntary organisations considered that greater use could be made of currently under-used school facilities outwith school term time, in addition to boosting provision of workplace nurseries.

6.25 The theme of joint working was furthered with suggestions from respondents across a range of sectors for a partnership and shared approach to training the workforce, to ensure suitably qualified ELC workers are in place to accommodate the expanded hours.

6.26 Other signficant views put forward by several respondents were:

- Care Inspectorate standards and requirements may need re-visited to ensure they are not acting as barriers to expansion. The time required for applying for a variation was cited as a current obstacle, particularly for childminders who wish to increase their capacity.

- Support from local authorities over planning applications and building regulations could go some way to helping private and third sector providers through the planning application process.

- Private and third sector providers may benefit from help with business planning and development. Professional advice was viewed as important in order to help such providers secure loans from banks.

Views relating to Question 18 emerging from consultative events

6.27 Potential was identified for expanding capacity amongst private and third sector providers, in collaboration with other partners, possibly in blended models. It was considered that extending the premises of primary schools offered opportunity to provide more ELC capacity in this way.

6.28 The view emerging from one group was that space currently used for training purposes and meeting parents, should not be compromised by using it for extending ELC capacity.

7. Financing and Delivering the Expansion

Funding Model Options

Funding for delivery of the ELC entitlement of 600 hours is currently included within the general revenue grant provided to local authorities.

Additional resource, both revenue and capital, will be required to fund the expansion in entitlement to 1140 hours and this must be delivered efficiently whilst ensuring that a high quality service is provided.

There are a range of potential approaches being considered to funding the provision of ELC in future. They range from predominantly supply-side models where funding is directed through providers, to demand-led approaches where funding is directed through parents and carers.

Four broad funding models under consideration are:

Option 1: Funding Dependent on Delivery – funding to continue to be routed through the local government block grant route.

Option 2: Funding Follows the Child – more demand-led where parents and carers choose the provider and the funding follows, whilst still being administered by local authorities.

Option 3: Early Learning and Childcare Accounts – demand-led system where parents and carers receive the funding.

Option 4: A hybrid approach – a model with similar principles to the self-directing care approach, where parents and carers choose how their child receives their ELC support, e.g. this could be determined by the local authority; parents and carers could choose their provider and then the money follows; or parents receive the funding (this could also be in the form of an Early Learning and Childcare Account).

Question 19: What funding model would best support our vision for high quality and flexible ELC provision, which is accessible and affordable for all?

7.1 196 respondents (58%) answered this question.

Preferences for funding model

7.2 97 respondents provided a clear indication of their preference for one of the funding models proposed. Table 7.1 overleaf gives a summary of their preferences.

Table 7.1: Summary of funding model preferences

Funding models	Number of respondents
Option 1: Funding dependent on delivery	32
Option 2: Funding follows the child	37
Option 3: ELC accounts	23
Option 4: A hybrid approach	5

7.3 Option 2, a model whereby funding follows the child, was identified most frequently as the preferred funding model to best support the vision for high quality and flexible ELC, which is accessible and affordable for all.

7.4 Seven respondents did not support any of the four options in particular, but expressed their support for funding to go directly to providers, in either a ring-fenced or voucher-style model of funding. Ten respondents, including three unions, provided support for an alternative model whereby local authority provision is expanded in a universal model of equitable provision for all, free at point of use. Several individual respondents suggested funding focused on enabling families to look after their children in their home setting.

Option 1: Views on advantages

7.5 Those in favour of Option 1 were largely local government respondents, one of whom argued that this option cannot be classed as wholly supply-led when it offered a responsive service, adapting to changing needs. Views were mixed on whether funding under this option should be ring-fenced or not.

7.6 The main advantages to this option were viewed as:

- Ensures a co-ordinated, predictable and sustainable approach.
- Already well understood with systems in place such as quality assurance; performance management.
- Will be ready to cope with increased demand within the timescale for expansion.
- Ensures protection for vulnerable families; families in deprived areas.
- Benefits from economies of scale; efficient; represents Best Value.
- Ensures continuity and investment in developing staff.
- Will result in quality standards being maintained.
- Safer for partner providers as more guaranteed income.

Option 1: Views on drawbacks

7.7 The main drawbacks to this option were viewed as:

- Limits flexibility and choice for parents who may not be offered the ELC setting of their choice.
- Bureaucratic; excessive paperwork.
- Uncertainty regarding how much funding will be allocated by local authority.

Option 2: Views on advantages

7.8 Those in favour of Option 2 were largely private sector providers and individual respondents, some of whom envisaged the return of vouchers within this model, possibly in the form of online "e-vouchers".

7.9 The main advantages to this option were viewed as:

- Gives parents real choice in ELC provision.
- Provides flexibility – can be used for 52 weeks of the year; more in school holiday periods.
- Gives parents with particular requirements, such as Gaelic-medium provision, greater likelihood of securing this.
- Avoids post-code lotteries.
- Cuts down provider administration.
- Avoids local authorities using allocated funding for other things.
- Providers receive payment quicker.

Option 2: Views on drawbacks

7.10 The main drawbacks to this option were viewed as:

- Too much flexibility results in parents chopping and changing, which is not good for children.
- Uncertainty of take-up and business, leading to fragility of settings, particularly in rural areas.
- Market forces risks, such as providers undercutting others, reducing staff wages, laying off staff when child numbers are lower.
- Difficult for providers to plan which will deter investment in staff and infrastructure.
- Markets may not respond quickly enough to expanded demand, with parents left without provision.
- Providers may opt out of delivering minimum standards and choose to be outwith the funding model, resulting in parents unable to use their funding to access free places.
- Parents may overspend their entitlement and run out of funds.
- Relies on parents being fully aware of the choices on offer and how to manage their funds.

Option 3: Views on advantages

7.11 Those in favour of Option 3 were also largely private sector providers and individual respondents.

7.12 The main advantages to this option were viewed as:

- Gives the best choice for parents.
- Funds can be spread over school holidays.

- Reduces bureaucracy.

- Parent power will drive up standards.

- Removes cross-boundary issues where, for example, parents live in one local authority and they require childcare in another.

- Helps parents to understand the scope and limits of the "free" provision.

Option 3: Views on drawbacks

7.13 The main drawbacks to this option were viewed as:

- Lack of certainty regarding funding for private providers and local authorities alike.

- Not predictable, may not work for rural communities, increasing fragility of provision.

- Administration could be complicated and parents may not understand the system.

- Parents may use funding for things other than ELC.

- Relies on there being provision to choose from, which may not be the case.

Option 4: Views on advantages

7.14 Those in favour of Option 4 included individuals, a private sector respondent and a local government respondent.

7.15 The main advantages to this option were viewed as:

- Flexible approach.

- May encourage creative solutions from parents.

- Reduces the administrative burden on providers.

Option 4: Views on drawbacks

7.16 The main drawbacks to this options were viewed as:

- Not all parents will have the capacity to manage this funding model which may require much administration by parents.

- Lack of certainty over sustainable funding for local authorities and partner providers.

- Local authorities will need to follow up on the creative solutions identified by parents.

General views

7.17 Many respondents re-iterated or made reference to points they had made in response to earlier questions. In particular, there was much support for setting and enforcing minimum standards of provision, whatever the funding model; and for national pay scales with more funds available to ensure Living Wages are paid.

7.18 Several respondents emphasised their view that childminders and other community solutions should form part of the options under the different funding models.

7.19 Option 2 (funding following the child) and Option 3 (ELC accounts) received most support in consultative events as offering most flexibility for families which could address challenges such as cross-border issues. One group suggested that under Option 3, parents could work together to lobby for local provision, such as workplace ELC.

7.20 Two groups posed the question of whether unused entitlement in a community could be re-allocated where needed.

Phasing of the expansion

The expansion will require sustantial levels of investment in both the workforce and in infrastructure. The investment will be phased over a 3 – 4 year period to ensure that the required capacity is in place by 2020 to enable full roll-out of the expanded entitlement.

The Scottish Government considers that an approach to smoothing the transition from 600 to 1140 hours entitlement is to phase in the additional entitlement for some children as additional capacity (both infrastrucuture and workforce) becomes available. There are a number of options for phasing in entitlement, for example:

Option 1: Incremental increase in the level of entitlement made available (e.g. at some point between now and 2020 the entitlement could increase from 600 hours to, for example, 800 hours, as a step towards 1140 hours).

Option 2: Allow local authorities to expand entitlement incrementally as increased capacity becomes available.

Option 3: Expanded entitlement offered to cover a range of cohorts, geographic areas and providers.

Question 20: If it were possible for aspects of the entitlement to be phased in ahead of the full roll out by 2020, how should this be implemented?

7.21 207 respondents (62%) answered this question.

7.22 A common view was that the expansion will require detailed planning to ensure the necessary physical and workforce infrastructures are in place to support additional hours. A recurring theme was that quality should not be compromised in the expansion.

7.23 Amongst the respondents to the question were many who expressed their opposition to the expansion. Despite their concerns, however, several respondents still provided constructive comments on phasing the expansion.

7.24 A recurring view amongst local government and individual respondents in particular was that information will be needed, as soon as possible, on capital and

revenue funding available for the expansion. This was seen as crucial for long-term planning and to enable providers in different settings to work towards expanding capacity according to their means.

7.25 Many respondents across a range of settings identified workforce planning as another key pre-requisite to expanding provision in an equitable and strategic manner. This included detailed discussions with Skills Development Scotland, Business Gateway, and colleges and universities, over providing relevant and accessible training to support the future ELC workforce.

7.26 Another recurring theme was that the 2017 trials will provide lessons to be shared; and that new trials should be designed to fill gaps, for example, in specific settings or locations.

7.27 A small number of respondents, across a range of settings, considered that phasing would happen naturally and organically, as infrastructure gradually developed, staffing levels increased, and current under-used capacity is identified and utilised.

Views on the options suggested in the consultation

7.28 Of the three options suggested, Option 3 received the greatest explicit support. Around 80 respondents, from a wide range of sectors, provided commentary which suggested that they supported Option 3. One respondent remarked:

"There is no 'one size fits all' approach to phasing. In some areas, it may make sense to target provision at areas of deprivation. In some areas, the best group might be parents who need childcare for work, and are on lower incomes. Remote areas with no other forms of childcare might also be a good place to start. This might be better planned on a local level to meet the needs of each community context." (Local Government)

7.29 Emerging from the supporters of this option were many perceived priorities for early expanded entitlement, the most frequently mentioned being:

- Deprived areas
- Trials across all settings which included childminders
- Working parents
- By age (both oldest to youngest and vice versa mentioned)

7.30 Support for Option 1 and Option 2 was approximately equal, with around 20 respondents explicitly identifying each as their preferred approach.

7.31 Those providing rationale in favour of Option 1 suggested that a universal, phased approach would avoid a post-code lottery and would encourage settings across the board to put in place infrastructure in readiness for the next phase.

7.32 Those favouring Option 2 suggested that local authorities could work pragmatically, stepping up entitlement in line with developments in capacity and as

funding is released to them. A few respondents considered that local authorities would focus on areas of deprivation initially.

Views relating to Question 20 emerging from consultative events

7.33 Only one group addressed this question with support given for a phased approach to increasing entitlement, perhaps to 900 hours in the first phase.

Annex: List of Respondents

FE/HE = 8

Ayrshire College
CELCIS
Child's Curriculum Group
New College Lanarkshire
School of Education, University of Strathclyde
The Open University
University of Aberdeen
West Lothian College Workforce Development Further Education College - SVQ
SSCYP Assessors

Local Government = 29

Aberdeen City Community Planning Partnership
Aberdeenshire Council
ADES Early Years Network
Angus Council
Argyll and Bute Council
COSLA
Dumfries and Galloway Council
Early Years Team City of Edinburgh
East Ayrshire Council
East Lothian Council
East Renfrewshire Council: Education Department
Falkirk Council
Fife Council
Glasgow City Council
Inverclyde Education Services
Midlothian Council Early Years Education team
Moray Council Education and Social Care Senior Management Team
North Ayrshire Council
North Lanarkshire Council
Orkney Islands Council
Perth and Kinross Council
Renfrewshire Council, including representation from ELCC partner providers
Scottish Borders Council Early Years Team
Scottish Local Authorities Directors of Finance
SEStran (Statutory Regional Transport Partnership covering eight local authorities in the South East of Scotland).
Shetland Islands Council
The Highland Council
West Dunbartonshire Council
West Lothian Council

Local Government Nurseries and Schools = 6

Cowdenbeath Primary School
Crail Primary School, Nursery Team
Dunbar Primary School
Milton Nursery (Highland)
Tillicoultry Nursery
Whalsay School

National Inspection and Improvement Bodies = 5

Care Inspectorate
Education Scotland
NHS Health Scotland
Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC)
Skills Development Scotland

Parent Representative Bodies = 5

Comann nam Pàrant (Nàiseanta)
Cunningsburgh school parent council
Hamnavoe Primary School Parent Council
Lenzie Meadow Primary School and Early Years Centre Parent Council
Sandwick Junior High School Parent Council

Private Nurseries = 33

ACE Place Nursery & Out of School Care
Blackhall Nursery
Bright Horizons Family Solutions UK
Burns Bairns Under 5s
Busy Bees Childcare
Cairellot Nursery
Cheeky Monkeys
Edzell Nursery
Enterprise Childcare
First Adventures Nursery
First Class Day Nursery
Flying Start Nursery
Highland Fling Childcare
Jacaranda Nursery
Kidstore Childcare Ltd
Kinderhouse Services
Les Enfants Nursery
Little Voices Nurseries
Lullaby Lane Nursery
Meadows Nursery School
Mulberry Bush Montessori Killearn & Yorkhill
North Edinburgh Childcare
Pear Tree Nursery

Priestfield House Nursery
Shetland Partner Providers
Smart Cookies Childcare
Step by Step Private Nursery, Cumbernuald
Step by Step Private Nursery Ltd
Stepping Stones Nursery School Airdrie Ltd
Tinies Glasgow Ltd
The Bearsden Nursery Ltd and Hillfoot Nursery Ltd
The Croft Nurseries Ltd
Woodland Outdoor Kindergartens

Third Sector and Voluntary Organisations = 23

Aberlour Child Care Trust
Barnardo's Scotland
Bòrd na Gàidhlig
Care and Learning Alliance
Children in Scotland
Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) in Scotland
Early Years Scotland
Enable Scotland
Guide Dogs Scotland
Highland & Moray Accredited Training Services
Mindroom
National Day Nurseries Association
One Parent Families Scotland
Parenting across Scotland
Peeple
Royal National Institute of Blind People, Scotland
Save the Children
Scottish Childminding Association
Scottish Out of School Care Network
The Big Lottery Fund in Scotland
The Children's Food Trust
Working Families
Zero Tolerance Charitable Trust

Third Sector and Voluntary Providers = 6

Blairdardie Out of School Service
Coldstream Playgroup
Cumberland & Kilsyth Nursery & Out of School Care Service
Haugh of Urr Nursery
Toybox Children's Centre
Summerston Childcare

Unions = 5

Association of Headteachers and Deputes in Scotland
Educational Institute of Scotland
National Union of Students Scotland
UNISON
Voice Scotland

Other = 8

A1 School Leadership Solutions
Council – (no further information provided)
Fair Funding for our Kids
First Aid Training Co-operative
Food for Life Scotland (Soil Association Scotland)
Mindstretchers
Reform Scotland
Scottish Women's Convention

Individual Respondents = 208

208 individual respondents including several representatives from Lecropt Nursery, Old Doune Road Nursery and childminders.

Scottish Government
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