

## **Scottish Government Early Learning and Childcare COVID-19 Update No. 20 – November 2021**

### **Introduction from Alison Cumming, Director for Early Learning and Childcare**

Hello and welcome to our November update.

We've got a few staffing changes to tell you about this month.

Vikki Bruce will be joining us on 1 December to take up post as head of the ELC Quality and Recovery Unit, succeeding Liz Levy who has moved to a new post in Children and Families Directorate leading implementation of the UNCRC. Simon Mair has also taken up a post in the Scottish Government Covid Recovery Directorate, and Hannah Keates will be moving on in December as Unit Head for Local Government Relationships and Policy where she will be building on all her experience of working closely with Councils. Matthew Farrell will be joining us on 13 December to take over from Simon and Hannah in leading a new Strategy, Outcomes and Finance Unit.

We are delighted to welcome Vikki and Matthew to Team ELC and wish Simon, Hannah and Liz all the very best in their new roles, having each made a huge contribution to delivering the 1140 hours expansion.

This month's update includes a note on planning for the festive season, information on outdoor learning content at the Learning Places Scotland conference and details of how to apply to The Promise Partnership – A Good Childhood fund.

Best wishes

Alison

[Find previous editions of the ELC Covid-19 update here.](#)

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## **1. Covid-19 Guidance**

### **1.1 Guidance update on parental visits**

We wrote to childcare providers on 18 November to thank them for their hard work this year, and to highlight some important messages as we head into the winter period – recognising that unfortunately the pandemic is not yet over. The letter signposted providers to some sections of the guidance which may be helpful as they think about planning for winter and the festive season – to keep children, staff and their families as safe as possible. It also highlighted the importance of us all sticking to the baseline mitigations that are in place, and taking steps such as getting vaccinated, having a booster jab if you are eligible, and testing regularly. You can see the letter [here](#).

**Contact:** Debbie Silver at [debbie.silver@gov.scot](mailto:debbie.silver@gov.scot)

### **1.2 COVID-19 safety eLearning module**

Our COVID –19 Safety eLearning module is now available here: [COVID-19 safety module](#) . As we approach winter, it is vital that staff understand what they need to do to keep themselves and others safe while they are at work. Please support your staff to complete the module as part of their working day.

**Contact:** Debbie Silver at [debbie.silver@gov.scot](mailto:debbie.silver@gov.scot)

### **1.3 Warn and Inform letters**

The Warn and Inform letters that settings send to parents/carers when they are informed of a positive COVID-19 case among their staff or children have been translated into the following languages: Gaelic, Chinese (Simplified), Urdu, Punjabi, Polish, Arabic. These versions have been added to the supporting document section of the guidance here: [COVID-19 early learning and childcare services documents](#)

## **2. Workforce and Professional Learning**

### **2.1 Bringing qualified and experienced practitioners back in to the sector**

As reported in the October update, along with our colleagues at the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) we have been considering ways to bring qualified and experienced practitioners in to the sector. With that in mind we have recently invited those whose registrations with SSSC have lapsed in the last five years, to re-join the sector.

Over 150 people, from across the country, have registered details of their experience and qualifications on [MySSSC](#). Settings are already accessing information on potential candidates in their area and getting in touch with them about available roles. This information can be found by logging into [MySSSC](#).

This is not a job matching service, but a means for individuals to express an interest in re-joining the sector and for employers to access a pool of experienced candidates, potentially cutting down on the time and cost commitments of recruitment. Employers will still be required to undertake the necessary pre-employment checks such as PVG applications and references.

This is a free service, available for all childcare settings and we are keen to make sure we understand whether it proves valuable to childcare employers. We would ask, that settings keep SSSC informed should they recruit individuals via the service. If settings use this service and select the candidates they are interested in, SSSC colleagues will send reminders to provide an update on the outcome.

A message from the Minister for Children and Young People on this topic issued as a provider notice on 21 October and can be read here: [Minister for Children and Young People \(careinspectorate.com\)](https://www.careinspectorate.com)

**Contact:** Scott Sutherland at [scott.sutherland@gov.scot](mailto:scott.sutherland@gov.scot)

## **2.2 Wellbeing resource for all childcare professionals**

A reminder that, along with Early Years Scotland, we have developed a wellbeing resource for all childcare staff. The [#TeamELCWellbeingHub](#) contains a wealth of practical information and advice on looking after yourself. There's also signposting to sources of support and a function that allows staff to connect to other practitioners across the country.

The Wellbeing Hub has been accompanied by a series of online events which provided colleagues with practical advice in the shape of a self-care toolkit. The feedback from those events has been overwhelmingly positive. Recordings of those events have been posted on the Hub and can be accessed at any time. We'd encourage everyone to take the time to see what the Hub can offer and take the time to look after yourselves.

**Contact:** Scott Sutherland at [scott.sutherland@gov.scot](mailto:scott.sutherland@gov.scot)

## **3. Education Scotland**

### **3.1 SLF Online 2021 – Final week of access to recordings**

The recordings from most of the sessions at this year's event will be available through the SLF virtual event [portal](#) until 30 November 2021.

If you didn't manage to register for the festival, please complete this [simple form](#) to receive joining instructions, which you will need to access the event portal.

**Contact:** Hazel Gore at [Communications@educationscotland.gov.scot](mailto:Communications@educationscotland.gov.scot)

## **4. Outdoor Play and Learning**

### **4.1 Outdoor Play and Learning at the Learning Places Scotland Conference**

This year's [Learning Places Scotland Conference](#) at the SEC in Glasgow on 23 and 24 November, featured a stand-alone ELC stage which showcased a range of inspiring and thought-provoking presentations. The conference is the annual gathering of the education community in partnership with the Scottish Government with a focus on the funding, design, build, maintenance and management of early years, schools, colleges and universities. It explored the evidence, benefits and spatial possibilities of connecting people, places and learning.

Kate Smith, from the Scottish Government's Childcare: Provision, Practice and Communications Unit, chaired a session 'Out to Play - recognising the value of outdoor spaces as a learning environment' at the Learning Places Scotland Conference, Glasgow, on Tuesday 23 November. Speakers Lynn Taylor, Education Scotland, Mairi Ferris, Inspiring Scotland, and Zoe Sills, Earthtime, shared examples of adapting and evolving outdoor spaces and developing practice. The session includes [video footage of children and practitioners in action](#), including one showing how one nursery magically transformed an unused outdoor space, at low cost.

Dr. Claire Warden, International Education Consultant, will also speak about the success of Scotland's Virtual Nature School as part of a Digital themed ELC session on Wednesday 24 November.

**Contact:** Lynne Carter at [lynne.carter@gov.scot](mailto:lynne.carter@gov.scot)

## **5. The Promise Partnership**

The Promise Partnership – A Good Childhood is an investment of circa £3.25 million from the Scottish Government. It is intended to deliver change in line with Scotland's commitment to [#KeepThePromise](#) and ensure children and young people grow up loved, safe and respected. The importance of maintaining loving, safe relationships is one of five priority areas of the Promise Scotland's [Plan 21-24](#) this area is detailed in [Change Programme One - A Good Childhood](#). This funding strand aims to offer investment that will help ensure children and young people experience a good childhood in a loving family environment, recognising family will mean different things to each child or young person.

Up to £100,000 is available per proposal and is open to individual organisations or collaborations. The investment is to help build upon or put structures in place that will create the space to think, plan and start to co-design changes that ensures a Good Childhood. Your proposal needs to reflect and consider **what** has to happen within your organisation, collaboration or local area to support a Good Childhood. You should detail **how** investment will be an enabler for systemic or infrastructure changes. This could include organisational cultures, changing practices, listening and planning, embedding participatory approaches that will support future service re-design.

**Deadlines for applications is 3 December, an information session will take place on 4 November and decisions for the funding will be made in January 2022.** For full details go to [The Promise Partnership – Corra](#).

**Contact:** Sheree McAlpine at [Sheree.McAlpine@gov.scot](mailto:Sheree.McAlpine@gov.scot)

## **6. The Scottish Milk and Healthy Snack Scheme**

The new Scheme allows for all preschool children attending a registered eligible setting to receive a funded portion of milk (or specified non-dairy alternative) and, for the first time, a healthy snack each day they spend 2 hours or more in childcare.

The Scottish Government is working in partnership with COSLA, Local Authorities, Child Care Settings and other key stakeholders to monitor the roll-out of the new Scheme including via an Implementation and Operations Group that launched on 26 October 2021.

The aim of the Implementation and Operations Group is to ensure the scheme is meeting the needs of children and settings.

A key element of the Group’s work is looking to increase the number of children benefiting from the scheme. This will involve identifying and addressing potential barriers to registration as we look ahead to scheme Year 2 and beyond.

For more information on the Implementation and operations group please refer to the Scottish Government webpage: [Milk and healthy snack scheme: Operation and Implementation Group - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot)

If you are eligible and have not already registered, we would urge you to make contact with your local authority (listed below) who administer the new Scheme. Further guidance on operation of the Scheme can be found here: [Scottish Milk and Healthy Snack Scheme: guidance for local authorities and day care settings.](#)

The Scottish Milk and Healthy Snack Scheme team continue to monitor a public facing mailbox where settings, suppliers and parents can request further information on the Scheme or notify us of any issues: [SMHSS@gov.scot](mailto:SMHSS@gov.scot)

## 6.1 Local Authority Contact Details

Local Authority	Email
<b>Aberdeen City</b>	<a href="mailto:SMHSS@aberdeencity.gov.uk">SMHSS@aberdeencity.gov.uk</a>
<b>Website address</b>	<a href="#">The Scottish Milk &amp; Healthy Snack Scheme   Aberdeen City Council</a>
<b>Aberdeenshire</b>	<a href="mailto:earlyyears@aberdeenshire.gov.uk">earlyyears@aberdeenshire.gov.uk</a>
<b>Website address</b>	<a href="#">Scottish Milk and Healthy Snack Scheme – Aberdeenshire Council</a>
<b>Angus</b>	<a href="mailto:ELC@angus.gov.uk">ELC@angus.gov.uk</a>
<b>Website address</b>	<a href="#">Scottish Milk and Healthy Snack Scheme: childcare providers   uncil</a>
<b>Argyll &amp; Bute</b>	<a href="mailto:earlyyears@argyll-bute.gov.uk">earlyyears@argyll-bute.gov.uk</a>
<b>Clackmannanshire</b>	<a href="mailto:kcarmichael@clacks.gov.uk">kcarmichael@clacks.gov.uk</a>
<b>Dumfries &amp; Galloway</b>	<a href="mailto:EarlyYearsSupport@dumgal.gov.uk">EarlyYearsSupport@dumgal.gov.uk.</a>
<b>Dundee City</b>	<a href="mailto:smhss@dundeecity.gov.uk">smhss@dundeecity.gov.uk</a>
<b>Website address</b>	<a href="#">smhss_information_sheet_1.pdf (dundeecity.gov.uk)</a>
<b>East Ayrshire</b>	<a href="mailto:EarlyYears-Milk&amp;Snacks@east-ayrshire.gov.uk">EarlyYears-Milk&amp;Snacks@east-ayrshire.gov.uk</a>
<b>Website address</b>	<a href="#">Scottish milk and healthy snack scheme · East Ayrshire Council hire.gov.uk)</a>
<b>East Dunbartonshire</b>	<a href="mailto:SMHSSenquiries@eastdunbarton.gov.uk">SMHSSenquiries@eastdunbarton.gov.uk</a>
<b>Website address</b>	<a href="#">Scottish Milk and Healthy Snack Scheme   East Dunbartonshire</a>
<b>East Lothian</b>	<a href="mailto:fundedproviders@eastlothian.gov.uk">fundedproviders@eastlothian.gov.uk</a>
<b>Website address</b>	<a href="#">Scottish Milk and Healthy Snack Scheme   Early Learning and   East Lothian Council</a>
<b>East Renfrewshire</b>	<a href="mailto:earlylearningandchildcare@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk">earlylearningandchildcare@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk</a>
<b>Edinburgh, City of</b>	<a href="mailto:smhss@edinburgh.gov.uk">smhss@edinburgh.gov.uk</a>
<b>Falkirk</b>	<a href="mailto:MilkandSnack@Falkirk.gov.uk">MilkandSnack@Falkirk.gov.uk</a>
<b>Website address</b>	<a href="#">Early learning &amp; childcare - Milk and Snack Scheme   Falkirk Council</a>
<b>Fife</b>	<a href="mailto:earlyyears.manager@fife.gov.uk">earlyyears.manager@fife.gov.uk</a>
<b>Website address</b>	<a href="#">Scottish Milk and Healthy Snack Scheme   Fife Council</a>
<b>Glasgow</b>	<a href="mailto:ELC@glasgow.gov.uk">ELC@glasgow.gov.uk</a>
<b>Inverclyde</b>	<a href="mailto:Lorna.Coote@inverclyde.gov.uk">Lorna.Coote@inverclyde.gov.uk</a>
<b>Midlothian</b>	<a href="mailto:Earlyyears@midlothian.gov.uk">Earlyyears@midlothian.gov.uk</a>

<b>Moray</b>	<a href="mailto:childcare.info@moray.gov.uk">childcare.info@moray.gov.uk</a>
<b>North Ayrshire</b>	<a href="mailto:earlylearningchildcare@north-ayrshire.gov.uk">earlylearningchildcare@north-ayrshire.gov.uk</a>
<b>North Lanarkshire</b>	<a href="mailto:SmithLou@northlan.gov.uk">SmithLou@northlan.gov.uk</a>
<b>Orkney</b>	<a href="mailto:elc@orkney.gov.uk">elc@orkney.gov.uk</a>
<b>Website address</b>	<a href="#">New milk and healthy snack scheme   North Lanarkshire Council</a>
<b>Perth and Kinross</b>	<a href="mailto:CWilliams@pkc.gov.uk">CWilliams@pkc.gov.uk</a>
<b>Renfrewshire</b>	<a href="mailto:CSSUPPORT@renfrewshire.gov.uk">CSSUPPORT@renfrewshire.gov.uk</a>
<b>Website address</b>	<a href="#">Scottish Milk and Healthy Snack Scheme - Renfrewshire Website</a>
<b>Scottish Borders</b>	<a href="mailto:earlyyearsteamed@scotborders.gov.uk">earlyyearsteamed@scotborders.gov.uk</a>
<b>Shetland</b>	<a href="mailto:ELC@shetland.gov.uk">ELC@shetland.gov.uk</a>
<b>South Ayrshire</b>	<a href="mailto:Learning.RaisingStandards@south-ayrshire.gov.uk">Learning.RaisingStandards@south-ayrshire.gov.uk</a>
<b>Website address</b>	<a href="#">Scottish Milk and Healthy Snack Scheme Registration - South Council (south-ayrshire.gov.uk)</a>
<b>South Lanarkshire</b>	<a href="mailto:earlyyears@southlanarkshire.gov.uk">earlyyears@southlanarkshire.gov.uk</a>
<b>Website address</b>	<a href="#">Scottish Milk and Healthy Snack Scheme - South Lanarkshire</a>
<b>Stirling</b>	<a href="mailto:eymilkscheme@stirling.gov.uk">eymilkscheme@stirling.gov.uk</a>
<b>Website address</b>	<a href="#">Scottish Milk and Healthy Snack Scheme - Stirling Council</a>
<b>West Dunbartonshire</b>	<a href="mailto:Teresa.Devaney@west-dunbarton.gov.uk">Teresa.Devaney@west-dunbarton.gov.uk</a>
<b>West Dunbartonshire</b>	<a href="mailto:Liz.Coles@west-dunbarton.gov.uk">Liz.Coles@west-dunbarton.gov.uk</a>
<b>Website address</b>	<a href="#">Milk and Healthy Snack Scheme   West Dunbartonshire Council (barton.gov.uk)</a>
<b>West Lothian</b>	<a href="mailto:milkandhealthysnackscheme@westlothian.gov.uk">milkandhealthysnackscheme@westlothian.gov.uk</a>



7 December	Learning for sustainability & STEM	<p>Post COP26 - what next? How do we build on this experience to continue to promote LfS through STEM experiences in our establishments?</p> <p>This professional learning session from Education Scotland is part of a series focussed on STEM in the North and is aimed at all practitioners (Early Years, Primary, Secondary, Post-16, CLD, local authority central teams and RIC) within the Northern Alliance region.</p>	<a href="#">Learning for sustainability &amp; STEM   Events   News and events   Education Scotland</a>
8 December	Stepping Stones: Digital learning and teaching workshop	<p>This useful session aims to increase the confidence and understanding of early career teachers in relation to digital learning and teaching. Some key concepts will be shared along with practical pedagogical approaches and accessible resources. There will be opportunities to ask questions and signposting to further professional learning opportunities.</p>	<a href="#">Stepping Stones: Digital learning and teaching workshop   Events   News and events   Education Scotland</a>
8 December	Investing in Communities Fund Round 2 Stakeholder Webinar	<p>The Regeneration Unit that delivers the Investing in Communities Fund (ICF) will be holding webinar sessions for interested stakeholders and prospective applicants to</p>	<a href="#">Webinar (microsoft.com)</a>

		provide an overview of the fund's aims, eligibility criteria and the application process prior to its anticipated opening for applications next calendar year including a Q&A.	
9 December	How does gender inequality affect attainment, wellbeing and participation?	<p>This is an introductory session, relevant to all settings, to explore the impact of gender inequality, gender stereotypes and unconscious bias on children and young people, with particular focus on attainment, participation and wellbeing.</p> <p>We will highlight strategies and practical approaches that help to address this including examples of good practice.</p>	<a href="#">'How does gender inequality affect attainment, wellbeing and participation?' (Dec)   Events   News and events   Education Scotland</a>

## 12. Annex B – Publications

<b>Date Published</b>	<b>Document Link</b>
11/10/2021	<a href="#">Updated Coronavirus (COVID-19): school aged childcare services guidance</a>
11/10/2021	<a href="#">Updated Coronavirus (COVID-19): childminder services guidance</a>
11/10/2021	<a href="#">Updated Coronavirus (COVID-19): early learning and childcare guidance</a>
28/09/2021	<a href="#">Perceptions of the impact of childminding services on child, parent and family outcomes: research findings - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)</a>
16/09/2021	<a href="#">Coronavirus (COVID-19): managing cases in schools and childcare settings - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)</a>
31/08/2021	<a href="#">Financial sustainability health check of the childcare sector in Scotland - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)</a>
31/08/2021	<a href="#">Early learning and childcare providers - local authority funding and support: overview - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)</a>
11/08/2021	<a href="#">Warn+and+Inform++-+information+sheet.pdf (www.gov.scot)Warn and Inform information sheet.pdf (www.gov.scot)</a>
03/08/2021	<a href="#">Coronavirus (COVID-19): early learning and childcare (ELC) services - checklist of mitigations for Level 0 and below - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)</a>
13/07/2021	<a href="#">Early learning and childcare: statutory guidance - July 2021</a>
23/06/2021	<a href="#">Early Learning and Childcare – National Induction Resource: Latest Version June 2021</a>
22/06/2021	<a href="#">Early Learning and Childcare: 2 year old eligibility - Income Threshold Change – June 2021- EQIA</a>
22/06/2021	<a href="#">Early Learning and Childcare: 2 year old eligibility – Income Threshold Change – June 2021- BRIA</a>
16/06/2021	<a href="#">Early Learning and Childcare Expansion Delivery Progress Report, May 2021</a>
07/06/2021	<a href="#">Scottish Milk and Healthy Snack Scheme: guidance for local authorities and day care settings</a>
24/03/2021	<a href="#">Funding follows the child and the national standard for early learning and childcare providers: interim guidance - update March 2021</a>
24/03/2021	<a href="#">Equity and excellence leads: Care Inspectorate findings</a>
17/03/2021	<a href="#">Out to Play - creating outdoor play experiences for children: practical guidance - new chapters</a>
17/03/2021	<a href="#">Nature-based early learning and childcare - influence on children's health, wellbeing and development: literature review</a>
15/03/2021	<a href="#">Early Years providers helped to take first steps with with cyber security - National Cyber Security Centre</a>
17/03/2021	<a href="#">Nature-based early learning and childcare - influence on children's health, wellbeing and development: literature review</a>
15/03/2021	<a href="#">Early Years providers helped to take first steps with cyber security - National Cyber Security Centre</a>
21/01/2021	<a href="#">Our commitment to childminding: report</a>