



Wed 26/03/2014 12:21

Reply from Scottish Government to inquiry regarding childcare payments in an independent Scotland

To [redacted]

Dear [redacted]

Thank you for your email regarding childcare payments in an independent Scotland.

Before discussing independence, it may be helpful to mention the funding the Scottish Government is providing for expanded childcare in the next two years. As you may be aware, the Children and Young People Bill was passed by the Scottish Parliament on 19 February. From August this year, the Bill will expand nursery provision from 475 hours to a minimum of 600 hours for all 3 and 4 year olds and around 15% of 2 year olds, with this entitlement expanded to around 27% of 2 year olds from August 2015. The Scottish Government has made a commitment to local government to fully fund the costs of the Children and Young People Bill. To do that, we have committed a quarter of a billion pounds (£249 million).

It is important to emphasise that it is for local authorities to determine fair and sustainable settlements locally with partner providers, while securing high quality provision in a range of settings. It is in the interests of local authorities to reflect costs of providers in their local settlements if they are to receive high quality and sustainable services.

In addition to the funding associated with the Children and Young People Bill, we have set out in *Scotland's Future*, our independence White Paper, our commitment to investing £700 million in the first Parliament of an independent Scotland. In our first budget after independence we will commit £100 million to extend 600 hours of childcare a year to nearly half of Scotland's 2 year olds. By the end of the first Parliament those vulnerable 2 year olds and all 3 and 4 year olds will be entitled to 1,140 hours of childcare – which is broadly the same number of hours as provided in primary school. To achieve this, we will invest a further £600 million.

In the long-term, our aim is to provide 1,140 hours to all children in Scotland, from age one to starting school. We estimate that around 240,000 children and 212,000 families will benefit each year.

To achieve this long-term aim and ensure that our future investment in early learning and childcare achieves the best possible outcomes, the Scottish Government committed in *Scotland's Future* to undertaking a review of our cost structure, based on international examples. We would want childcare providers and local government to be part of that process.

I hope this response is helpful to you.

Kind regards,



[redacted]
Early Years Policy Delivery Unit
Children and Families Directorate
Scottish Government

Annex 2



Wed 20/08/2014 09:18

Reply from the Scottish Government

To 



Thank you for your inquiry to the Scottish Government's Scotreferendum mailbox, asking about affordable, high quality childcare.

All 3 and 4 year olds in Scotland are entitled to free childcare, and from this month around 15% of 2 year olds are also entitled. It is the responsibility of local authorities to provide places, so if need be you should contact them in the first instance. You'll be interested to know that the Scottish Government is expanding childcare this month, and we plan a significant increase in funded childcare under independence, which will be of benefit to parents as it will extend provision from around 16 hours per week to 30 hours per week, and will apply to all children from age one to starting school. Below are more details of what we are doing now and what we plan under independence.

We know that childcare costs can be an issue for parents, and that is why we are acting now to increase childcare provision, through the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act. From this month, the Act increases the amount and flexibility of free Early Learning and Childcare from 475 to a minimum of 600 hours per year for all 3 and 4 year olds, and 15% of Scotland's most vulnerable 2 year olds. And from August 2015 provision will be extended to 27% of 2 year olds, based on free school meal eligibility criteria. 600 hours is an increase of 45% – so almost half – based on the 412.5 hours this Government inherited in 2007.

In *Scotland's Future*, our independence White Paper, we outlined our blueprint for achieving universal childcare in Scotland. In our first budget after independence we will commit £100 million to extend 600 hours of childcare a year to nearly half of Scotland's 2 year olds. By the end of the first Parliament those vulnerable 2 year olds and all 3 and 4 year olds will be entitled to 1,140 hours of childcare – which is broadly the same number of hours as provided in primary school. To achieve this, we will invest a further £600 million. In the long-term, our aim is to provide 1,140 hours to all children in Scotland, from age one to starting school. Once fully implemented, we estimate that around 240,000 children and 212,000 families will benefit each year, saving families up to £4,600 per child per year.

I hope this reply is helpful.

Kind regards,





Early Years Policy Delivery Unit
Children and Families Directorate
Scottish Government