

5 March 2025: SG internal update to Ministers

**From:** [redacted s.38(1)(b) applies]

**Sent:** 05 March 2025 15:23

**To:** Minister for Children, Young People and The Promise <MinisterCYPTP@gov.scot>

**Cc:** Director for Children and Families <DirectorforChildrenandFamilies@gov.scot>; Eleanor Passmore <Eleanor.Passmore@gov.scot>; [redacted s.38(1)(b) applies]; [redacted s.38(1)(b) applies]; [redacted s.38(1)(b) applies]; Communications Education & Skills <CommunicationsEducationandSkills@gov.scot>; [redacted s.38(1)(b) applies]; **Subject:** FW: For awareness: Victoria Quay Nursery in Edinburgh - Inspection gradings

PS / Minister for Children, Young People and The Promise,

In August we informed Ministers of the poor inspection outcome of the Victoria Quay Nursery, operated by North Edinburgh Childcare (see trail below). The centre is registered for 37 children aged three months to five years attending at any one time. There are currently 45 children on the roll who access their 1140 hours in a wide variety of attendance patterns, to suit families' working arrangements. The nursery provision is for "employees of Scottish Ministers" and therefore only available to those working at the Scottish Government.

Following recent media interest ([Edinburgh Nursery told "not enough improvement" made - The Edinburgh Reporter](#)) we are writing to provide a further update below for Ministerial awareness.

- Due to the poor Education Scotland/HMIE inspection findings that were [published on 30 July](#), the setting has been at risk of losing their funded ELC provider status. In August 2024 Edinburgh Council placed the setting on a Service Improvement Period (SIP), during which the setting has been receiving support from the Council and the Inspectorates to make improvements, particularly in respect of leadership, play spaces, learning and teaching, and planning and assessment.
- The setting was again jointly inspected by the Care Inspectorate and Education Scotland/HMIE in December and a [follow-up report](#) was published. This graded the setting as '**weak**' in respect of care, play and learning and '**adequate**' in respect of leadership.
- **Some** improvement had been made to staffing (particularly at transition points such as lunchtime) and children's personal plans - although a new area for improvement was identified relating to development and embedding personal planning to benefit children's care and support.
- Improvement **still lacked** in areas, including developing and embedding quality assurance processes, leading to gaps in provision not being identified and addressed. As a result, children are not yet experiencing a quality mealtime experience or high-quality play and learning opportunities.
- In February Education Scotland/HMIE published their [letter](#) to parents outlining areas for improvement.

Next steps

- Education Scotland/HMIE will schedule another visit in six months.
- Edinburgh Council has made a support officer available to work within the setting, as well as allocating a teacher to support the setting with improvement. The Council Head of Service is also regularly engaging with the setting.
- The Council remains committed to supporting the VQ nursery to improve but has agreed that they will review the VQ nursery's services partnership contract with the



**From:** [redacted s.38(1)(b) applies]  
**Sent:** Friday, August 16, 2024 10:29 AM  
**To:** Minister for Children, Young People and The Promise <[MinisterCYPTP@gov.scot](mailto:MinisterCYPTP@gov.scot)>  
**Cc:** Director for Children and Families <[DirectorforChildrenandFamilies@gov.scot](mailto:DirectorforChildrenandFamilies@gov.scot)>; Eleanor Passmore <[Eleanor.Passmore@gov.scot](mailto:Eleanor.Passmore@gov.scot)>; [redacted s.38(1)(b) applies]; [redacted s.38(1)(b) applies]; [redacted s.38(1)(b) applies]; [redacted s.38(1)(b) applies]; Communications Education & Skills <[CommunicationsEducationandSkills@gov.scot](mailto:CommunicationsEducationandSkills@gov.scot)>  
**Subject:** For awareness: Victoria Quay Nursery in Edinburgh - Inspection gradings

PS / Minister for Children, Young People and The promise

For Ministerial awareness – In May the Victoria Quay Nursery in Edinburgh, operated by North Edinburgh Childcare, received a joint inspection by Education Scotland/HMIE and the Care Inspectorate. The inspection findings were [published on 30 July](#) and the setting's inspection grades are not favourable. Six grades were assessed as weak and three as adequate. This means that the settings is not currently meeting the National Standard and is at risk of losing their funded ELC provider status.

Officials have liaised with the Care Inspectorate and Edinburgh Council who provided an update as follows:

- Inspectorates have written to parents to inform them of the weak inspection gradings and to set out next steps;
- Edinburgh Council informed the nursery on 9 August that they will be placed on a Service Improvement Period (SIP), during which the setting will receive support from the Council and the Inspectorates to work on areas where improvement is required;
- Victoria Quay Nursery had been subject of a previous SIP in 2019 following unsatisfactory gradings. They subsequently received significant support from the local authority resulting in a much improved assessment following an inspection in October 2021;
- A return inspection is planned for 6 months hence (30 January 2025) to assess progress made;
- The inspectorates will again write to parents at that time.

Officials are aware that the nursery continues to regularly engage with parents about their concerns. We are not aware of any media interest at this stage, in response to the publication of the gradings report, but we wanted to make Ministers aware.

Regards,

[redacted s.38(1)(b) applies]

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**From:** [redacted s.38(1)(b) applies]  
**Sent:** 17 February 2025 08:50  
**To:** [redacted s.38(1)(b) applies]  
**Cc:** [redacted s.38(1)(b) applies]  
**Subject:** FW: For awareness: Victoria Quay Nursery in Edinburgh - Inspection gradings

Morning [redacted s.38(1)(b) applies]

Could you please ask the CI for an update on the situation at the VQ nursery when you have a chance and provide an update to Ms D-I?

It looks like it is struggling again:

[Edinburgh Nursery told "not enough improvement" made - The Edinburgh Reporter](#)

Many thanks

Vikki

[redacted s.38(1)(b) applies]

**Unit Head – Early Learning and Childcare: Quality, Equity and Workforce Unit**  
Directorate for Children and Families | Scottish Government  
T: [redacted s.38(1)(b) applies] E : [redacted s.38(1)(b) applies]

*Please note that I work Monday-Thursday, and Friday afternoons.*

(I use size 14 font in line with accessibility best practice)

**From:** [redacted s.38(1)(b) applies] > **On Behalf Of** Minister for Children, Young People and The Promise  
**Sent:** 04 September 2024 17:09  
**To:** [redacted s.38(1)(b) applies] ; Minister for Children, Young People and The Promise <[MinisterCYPTP@gov.scot](mailto:MinisterCYPTP@gov.scot)>  
**Cc:** Director for Children and Families <[DirectorforChildrenandFamilies@gov.scot](mailto:DirectorforChildrenandFamilies@gov.scot)>; Eleanor Passmore <[Eleanor.Passmore@gov.scot](mailto:Eleanor.Passmore@gov.scot)>; [redacted s.38(1)(b) applies] ; [redacted s.38(1)(b) applies] ; [redacted s.38(1)(b) applies] ; [redacted s.38(1)(b) applies] ; [redacted s.38(1)(b) applies] ; Communications Education & Skills <[CommunicationsEducationandSkills@gov.scot](mailto:CommunicationsEducationandSkills@gov.scot)>  
**Subject:** RE: For awareness: Victoria Quay Nursery in Edinburgh - Inspection gradings

Hi [redacted s.38(1)(b) applies]



Officials are aware that the nursery continues to regularly engage with parents about their concerns. We are not aware of any media interest at this stage, in response to the publication of the gradings report, but we wanted to make Ministers aware.

Regards,

[redacted s.38(1)(b) applies]

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19 February 2025: correspondence between ELC Directorate, Care Inspectorate and HMIE

**From:** [redacted s.38(1)(b) applies]  
**Sent:** 26 February 2025 12:10  
**To:** [redacted s.38(1)(b) applies] ; Audrey Donnan  
<Audrey.Donnan@careinspectorate.gov.scot>  
**Cc:** [redacted s.38(1)(b) applies] ; Patricia Watson  
<Patricia.Watson@educationscotland.gov.scot>  
**Subject:** RE: Victoria Quay nursery

Hi [redacted s.38(1)(b) applies] and Audrey,

Many thanks for the information. For awareness – I will shortly be making a few enquiries with Edinburgh Council too, mainly about the SIP.

Thanks so much again for the prompt response.

[redacted s.38(1)(b) applies]

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**From:** [redacted s.38(1)(b) applies]  
**Sent:** 19 February 2025 08:37  
**To:** [redacted s.38(1)(b) applies]  
**Cc:** Guch Dhillon; [redacted s.38(1)(b) applies] ; Patricia Watson  
<[Patricia.Watson@educationscotland.gov.scot](mailto:Patricia.Watson@educationscotland.gov.scot)>  
**Subject:** RE: Victoria Quay nursery

[redacted s.38(1)(b) applies]

Please find below our respective updates  
CI

- After inspecting the service alongside Education Scotland colleagues on 2 December 2024 we published a follow-up report in December 2024.
- At the previous inspection we evaluated 'How good is our leadership' as weak. However, improvements made to the service had resulted in a re-evaluation to adequate.
- A requirement had been met which meant that there were enough staff to ensure children were supported throughout the day, particularly at transition points, such as lunchtime.
- Sufficient progress had been made to children's personal plans and so this requirement was met. However, a new area for improvement was set to further develop and embed personal planning to benefit children's care and support.
- Sufficient progress had not been made to develop and embed quality assurance processes. As a result, gaps in provision were not yet consistently being identified and addressed as part of a continuous

improvement approach. A requirement from the previous report will remain with an extended timescale of 31 March 2025.

- While some improvements had been made, two areas for improvement had not been fully met. As a result, children were not yet experiencing a quality mealtime experience or high quality play and learning opportunities. Both areas for improvement will remain.

## Education Scotland

- On 11 February, a letter to parents and carers was published by HMIE
- Sufficient progress has not taken place since the last visit in 2 of the action points
- an appropriate start has been made in the other 2 action points
- The setting needs to improve the 4 safeguarding issues from the original inspection in May 24
- 2 further safeguarding issues were identified during the further inspection.
- A return visit by HIME is planned within 6 months of the publication of the letter.
- Inspectors will write again to parent/ carers at that time

[redacted s.38(1)(b) applies] and Audrey

**From:** [redacted s.38(1)(b) applies]

**Sent:** 17 February 2025 12:55

**To:** Audrey Donnan <[Audrey.Donnan@careinspectorate.gov.scot](mailto:Audrey.Donnan@careinspectorate.gov.scot)> ; [redacted s.38(1)(b) applies]

**Cc:** [redacted s.38(1)(b) applies] ; [redacted s.38(1)(b) applies]

**Subject:** Victoria Quay nursery

Hi Audrey and [redacted s.38(1)(b) applies] ,

Hope you can help? In August we updated Ministers of the findings of an inspection in May 2024, of the Victoria Quay Nursery in Edinburgh, operated by North Edinburgh Childcare (inspection findings [published on 30 July](#)). The update to Ministers noted below, for awareness.

[Recent media coverage of 16 February](#) includes the Education Scotland letter to parents of 11 February noting that insufficient improvement progress has been made by the setting and that Inspectorates will be liaising with Edinburgh Council regarding the setting's capacity to improve.

We will need to update Ministers again on this issue. Are you able to provide more information on what the likely next steps might be to support the setting to continue operating as a funded provider?

Grateful for any further info you can offer?

[redacted s.38(1)(b) applies]

**Update to Minsters in August 2024:**

- Six grades were assessed as weak and three as adequate. This means that the settings is not currently meeting the National Standard and is at risk of losing their funded ELC provider status.
- Officials have liaised with the Care Inspectorate and Edinburgh Council who provided an update as follows:
  - Inspectorates have written to parents to inform them of the weak inspection gradings and to set out next steps;
  - Edinburgh Council informed the nursery on 9 August that they will be placed on a Service Improvement Period (SIP), during which the setting will receive support from the Council and the Inspectorates to work on areas where improvement is required;
  - Victoria Quay Nursery had been subject of a previous SIP in 2019 following unsatisfactory gradings. They subsequently received significant support from the local authority resulting in a much improved assessment following an inspection in October 2021;
  - A return inspection is planned for 6 months hence (30 January 2025) to assess progress made;
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[redacted s.38(1)(b) applies]

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24 February 2025: SG internal correspondence

**From:** [redacted s.38(1)(b) applies]

**Sent:** 26 February 2025 11:52

**To:** [redacted s.38(1)(b) applies]

**Cc:** [redacted s.38(1)(b) applies] ; [redacted s.38(1)(b) applies] ; [redacted s.38(1)(b) applies]

**Subject:** RE: For awareness: Victoria Quay Nursery in Edinburgh - Inspection gradings

Thanks [redacted s.38(1)(b) applies] – please can you prepare a short update note to Ministers outlining next steps, including in respect of engagement with parents. Could you please include an update on the service improvement period from City of Edinburgh Council and how the Council is supporting the nursery to improve (assuming that they are doing work in this area). Could you also please include in the note details of the number of children at the nursery and the age ranges that the nursery covers?

Many thanks

[redacted s.38(1)(b) applies]

[redacted s.38(1)(b) applies]

**Unit Head – Early Learning and Childcare: Quality, Equity and Workforce Unit**

Directorate for Children and Families | Scottish Government

T: [redacted s.38(1)(b) applies] E: [redacted s.38(1)(b) applies]

*Please note that I work Monday-Thursday, and Friday afternoons.*

(I use size 14 font in line with accessibility best practice)

**From:** [redacted s.38(1)(b) applies]

**Sent:** 24 February 2025 13:02

**To:** [redacted s.38(1)(b) applies]

**Cc:** [redacted s.38(1)(b) applies] ; [redacted s.38(1)(b) applies] ; [redacted s.38(1)(b) applies]

**Subject:** RE: For awareness: Victoria Quay Nursery in Edinburgh - Inspection gradings

[redacted s.38(1)(b) applies] – please see below the updates provided last week by Care Inspectorate and HMIE regarding the Victoria Quay nursery. I can condense and send to Ministers by way of update – however – please see attached a letter that I've been copied to, from an SG colleague who has a child enrolled at the nursery.

Our SG colleague wrote to SG procurement leads asking about details for a procurement process, in the event of the nursery closing.

Please let me know if you want to have a quick catch up on next steps?

Many thanks,

### **Updates provided by Care Inspectorate and Education Scotland on 19 February 2025:**

#### Care Inspectorate

- After inspecting the service alongside Education Scotland colleagues on 2 December 2024 Care Inspectorate published a follow-up report in December 2024.
- At the previous inspection we evaluated 'How good is our leadership' as weak. However, improvements made to the service had resulted in a re-evaluation to adequate.
- A requirement had been met which meant that there were enough staff to ensure children were supported throughout the day, particularly at transition points, such as lunchtime.
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- 2 further safeguarding issues were identified during the further inspection.
- A return visit by HIME is planned within 6 months of the publication of the letter.
- Inspectors will write again to parent/ carers at that time

### **Update we provided to Ministers in August 2024 about the poor inspection findings of the Victoria Quay nursery:**

- In May 2024 the Victoria Quay Nursery in Edinburgh, operated by North Edinburgh Childcare, received a joint inspection by Education Scotland/HMIE and the Care Inspectorate. The inspection findings were [published on 30 July](#) and the setting's inspection grades are not favourable.
- Six grades were assessed as weak and three as adequate. This means that the settings is not currently meeting the National Standard and is at risk of losing their funded ELC provider status.
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**From:** [redacted s.38(1)(b) applies]

**Sent:** 17 February 2025 08:50

**To:** [redacted s.38(1)(b) applies]

**Cc:** [redacted s.38(1)(b) applies]

**Subject:** FW: For awareness: Victoria Quay Nursery in Edinburgh - Inspection gradings

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[redacted s.38(1)(b) applies]

**Unit Head – Early Learning and Childcare: Quality, Equity and Workforce Unit**

Directorate for Children and Families | Scottish Government

T: [redacted s.38(1)(b) applies] E: [redacted s.38(1)(b) applies]



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