

EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE THE GLASGOW OFFER



Important Note

The purpose of this document is to inform the reader regarding Glasgow City Council's current planning to implement the expansion of the child's entitlement in line with Scottish Government's Blueprint Policy for 1140 hours. This document therefore forms part of Glasgow City Council's on-going planning effort.

The document focuses upon our ambition and future service design. It is expected that as planning progresses some elements of the information contained in this document may evolve over time. The document is therefore correct as at the time of preparation (September 2017) but may be time-bound and require future updates.

Foreword

Glasgow is a city proud of its record and ambitious for its future.

From the development of Scotland's first family learning centres in the 1980s, to increasing provision above national entitlements, Glasgow has been a pioneer of early learning, childcare and family nurture, a commitment that continues to this day as Scotland's largest provider of early years care.

As we embark on a new phase in developing our city's economy, seeking to maximise opportunities for all of Glasgow's citizens, we recognise just how central the delivery of high quality early learning and childcare (ELC) will be to the next stage of this journey.

This is an opportunity for us to invest in the future of our children and our city.

There are, of course, challenges ahead as we seek to deliver the Scottish Government's commitment of 1140 hours of flexible ELC for all 3- and 4-year-olds and some 2-year-olds. But we must consider our 1140 plan as one element of our ambitious prospectus for how we deliver for our whole city.

An investment in Glasgow's economy, an investment in Glasgow's workforce and, most crucially, an investment in Glasgow's children for their futures.

This investment comes in light of growing international recognition of the value of strong early years provision from both economic and social perspectives. Recent reports from both the OECD and World Bank have stressed the importance of investing in early years provision, highlighting the boosts to children's foundational experiences and resilience for life, employment opportunities for parents, particularly maternal employment, as well as the impact of tackling educational disadvantage at the earliest stages.

Additionally, across the EU, member states continue to invest heavily in their own early learning and childcare services as they seek to meet the commitments laid out in the Europe 2020 strategy, emphasising the strong social and economic advantages of such investment.

The Scottish Government has been clear about its own aspirations for the development of childcare and early learning in Scotland. The increase in flexibly provided hours to 1140 per year by 2020 represents the next stage in seeking to achieve the ambition to make Scotland the best place in the world to grow up.

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In addition to the above aspirations, the First Minister has also set out her own, personal aims to tackle the attainment gap across Scottish schools. Given the particular relevance to Glasgow, with its high levels of deprivation, it is essential that this informs our own plans for early years expansion.

Glasgow City Council shares the Scottish Government’s aspirations to deliver, not just for our city’s children, but for our city as a whole. Glasgow City Council strives to be ‘A Learning City’; we want a highly skilled and well educated population that’s ready to meet the needs of our growing economy.

As a local authority responsible for the delivery of these ambitions, we have a duty to maximise the social and economic opportunities for all of Glasgow’s citizens, ensuring as many people benefit from this expansion as possible.

We must consider this an investment in our entire city – not just in our early years provision.

Firstly, we will seek to tackle the attainment gap, recognising the evidence that supporting a child’s early learning and wellbeing serves as a base for stronger educational outcomes across their life. By offering greater access to early learning, children will have the best start possible in life as we seek to challenge the educational disadvantage and equip children with the skills they need for their future.

Secondly, we will offer greater economic opportunities for Glasgow’s citizens, maximising the opportunities for parental, and particularly maternal, employment whilst also increasing our early years workforce.

Finally, and crucially for Glasgow, we will continue to work to tackle child poverty across our city. With one third of children in Glasgow living in poverty, Glasgow faces challenges unlike any other local authority. Working alongside our partners across the city through the Poverty Leadership Panel, we have sought to deliver improved childcare for a number of years. Tackling poverty is a key ambition for Glasgow City Council in our plans for expansion.

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Our aim is simple.

Every eligible child in Glasgow should be able to access flexible and affordable ELC of the highest quality.

Every parent and carer will recognise that they are welcome to share the child's ELC experience.

Every setting in Glasgow, whether public, private or voluntary, will seek to offer the best quality ELC possible, on a flexible basis that works for families, at an affordable cost and in an environment that can be accessed by all.

This is our ambition.

Glasgow has consistently led the way in driving forward improvements to childcare. This plan sets out the next stage of our journey – how we ensure we match our ambitions and deliver Early Learning to ensure our city can continue to flourish.



Councillor Chris Cunningham

City Convener for Education, Skills and Early Years

Setting the scene

Naomi Eisenstadt, Independent Advisor on Poverty and Inequality – *Shifting the Curve: A report to the First Minister*, January 2016

“A lack of affordable, good-quality, and flexible childcare is a barrier for many parents who would like to work, or would like to work more hours. The Scottish Government increased the entitlement to free early learning and childcare (ELC) from 475 to 600 hours per year through the *Children & Young People Act 2014*, including extending this offer to vulnerable 2-year-olds, and has pledged to increase this entitlement to 1140 hours per year by the end of the next Parliament – equivalent to around 30 hours per week if delivered during term time.

But if the ELC is of poor quality, it won’t deliver the school readiness goals that help ensure the next generation have the educational attainment necessary for higher skilled and better-paid jobs. So investment in quality of ELC as well as affordability is crucial. International evidence confirms that low quality ELC disproportionately affects poor children’s development. And the evidence also highlights the key role of practitioner qualifications and training in ensuring high quality.”

Future Position: Glasgow’s ELC Vision

Glasgow City Council has long understood the connection between access to high quality, early learning and childcare services as a key driver to addressing the impact of poverty, improving family circumstances and outcomes for children.

Over 30 years ago, Strathclyde Regional Council, GCC’s predecessor authority, brought together all early years services under Education and established a number of Family Learning Centres – a model of early years delivery which sought to provide access to integrated, learning and care services, all year round, full day for vulnerable families experiencing poverty and deprivation. The Family Learning Centre approach is now a well-established and effective model of delivery (service model) – many aspects of which are reflected across all GCC ELC services.

From the mid 1990s, Glasgow continued to both maintain and grow this service model and, in 2008, agreed its *Early Childhood and Extended Services (ECES) Strategy 2008-2013* which linked the provision of high quality ELC to the city’s economic and employability strategies. As national policy developed through the publication of the Scottish Government’s *Early Years Framework*, Glasgow City Council, aligned *One Glasgow 0-8*, its multi-agency early intervention strategy, with its ECES Strategy and

further developed an understanding of how best to help “just coping” families with a *flexible, extended, integrated, supportive offer encompassing child and family needs*.

This long history has taken Glasgow many steps along the road to delivery of the Government’s most recent aspiration for young children and their families, set out in the publication of “*A Blueprint for 2020 : The Expansion of Early Learning and Childcare in Scotland*”.

Glasgow has established a strong offer of nurturing, high quality, extended ELC services with 43% of registered places in Council provision already being within full year, full day models and access to funded partner provision, including some registered childminders, guaranteed on request for Glasgow parents. City wide, 47% of all children aged 0-5 years, currently access ELC provision with all day all year flexibility via either GCC settings or funded provider settings. Further work is needed to raise these percentages and ensure that, ultimately, all GCC and funded provider services within the city become fully flexible, accessible to and affordable for all families.

Current Position – Glasgow’s ELC Provision

Glasgow City Council is Scotland’s largest provider of ELC, delivering services through 110 settings across the city: 22 nursery classes; 44 term time nurseries; 5 extended day term time nurseries; and 39 extended day full year nurseries. Additionally, we work in partnership with 107 funded providers across the city to deliver funded places for children across Glasgow. A further 8 funded provider applications for partnership are in progress and are almost complete. On completion, Glasgow City Council will be in partnership with over 90% of the non-local authority registered services in the city.

At any one time around 12,000 children access nursery provision across Glasgow. In total, working alongside our partners, we deliver more than 9 million hours every year, with a current total annual ELC spend of over £63m per year.

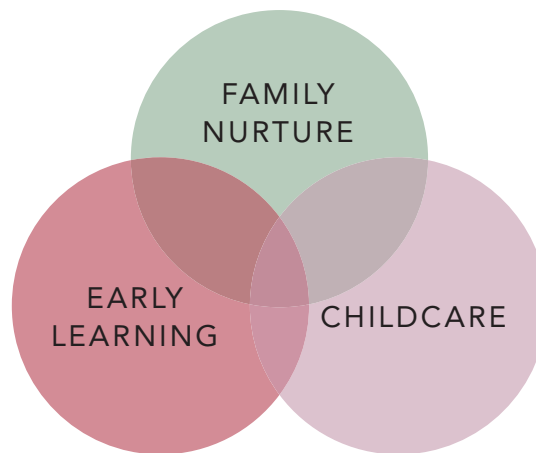
Our ELC provision also includes a number of specialist settings across both local authority and funded partner provision. Parents are able to access Gaelic education within four ELC settings across the city (one total immersion setting, two Gaelic medium settings and one funded Gaelic medium provider). In addition, the Council operates four ASL nursery classes along with two Pre-5 Assessment Centres to cater for children with additional support needs.



The Glasgow Offer

Glasgow’s vision for early learning and childcare puts the needs of the child and family at the centre of service delivery during the earliest years of a child’s life and onward into school years.

For Glasgow, there is a continuum from birth to school leaving age and an understanding of the link between inequalities in early life and poor outcomes in later life. There are very clear links between experience of child poverty, unequal opportunities in early life and the likely impact on future life chances and the impact this has on our city’s wider economy.



HIGH QUALITY, INTEGRATED, FLEXIBLE PROVISION

Central to the Glasgow Offer is a commitment to the principles outlined in the Scottish Government’s Blueprint guidance. The four principles have been key to the development of Glasgow’s service change proposals:

- **Quality** – Quality is and will remain central to Glasgow’s ELC offer and we are committed to ensuring ELC provision across the whole city remains of a high quality, regardless of provider. We are developing our Quality Plan, setting out the steps that will be taken to support continuous improvement in quality throughout the expansion programme.
- **Flexibility** – Building on Glasgow’s existing flexible models of delivery, we will offer greater choice to families seeking to access ELC services, across a range of providers, ensuring that provision is driven by the demand of parents as opposed to the supply of places.
- **Accessibility** – Exploring the scope of provision across the city, identifying gaps in provision and seeking to end areas of low availability to make sure that families can access services in convenient, local settings that suit their circumstances. We will also ensure that nurture and support for families is embedded in our ELC provision to help families who may need extra assistance to access services.

- **Affordability** – Pursuing a truly provider neutral model, we will ensure consistency in the approach across the city, regardless of provider, to make sure that parents can access high quality, flexible, affordable services which work for their needs.

Our Children

“Each child is unique and a competent and active learner who’s potential needs to be encouraged and supported. Each child is a curious, capable and intelligent individual. The child is a co-creator of knowledge who needs and wants interaction with other children and adults. As citizens of Europe children have their own rights which include early education and care.”

The European Commission on Early Childhood Education and Care 2011

Scotland has established a series of policy cornerstones, stemming from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, woven through with an implicit thread of support for inclusion, equality and diversity. These cover all aspects of a child’s life supporting their health, wellbeing, learning and access to services, including nursery care. Glasgow City Council’s services must be delivered within the context of these policies.

From the child’s perspective, their experience of Glasgow’s Early Learning and Childcare services should:

- Be rooted in the creation and nurturing of positive relationships
- Be responsive, caring and consistent in meeting their individual needs
- Be respectful, playful and joyful
- Take account of the assets which s/he brings and also gains from interactions with their family and others
- Be rich with opportunity to explore and create context and meaning, both from their own experiences and from those intentionally promoted by practitioners
- Be seamless in the delivery of high quality care and learning
- Recognise that their best interests and welfare are absolutely aligned with the best interests and welfare of their parent/family.

Our Families

“Unless we look after children, properly, nurture them consistently. Support them and their parents, who often don’t know how to be parents, we will continue to fail and we will continue to reap the consequences in terms of criminality and poor health. It’s time to break the cycle.”

Sir Harry Burns, Chief Medical Officer Scotland, Kilbrandon Lecture, 2012

Glasgow City Council wants to ensure that it delivers a high quality service that’s flexible, affordable and accessible for all.

All parents want flexibility and choice – even if their current choice is to continue with the service model they have used historically. Family circumstances can change and at a minimum, services should be able to flex to accommodate changes that parents need, whilst still ensuring that a strong focus on the child’s experience remains at the heart of provision.

Glasgow is committed to ensuring that, in delivering the commitment of 1140 hours of statutory provision, flexibility improves to put the needs of families first. Importantly, we recognise that early childhood development, supported by high quality education and access to comprehensive, flexible childcare services are powerful equalisers. This understanding has been strengthened within our ELC approach by embedding complementary strategies related to nurturing our most vulnerable children and families and to early identification of problems.

Families are the most important influence in the early years and evidence (Gutman & Feinstein, 2007; Sylva *et al.*, 2004) suggests that parental involvement in the early years has a greater impact on children’s well-being and achievement than any other factor, such as family income, parental education or the nursery environment. Supporting parents to help them provide a positive home learning environment is a vital part of improving outcomes for children, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

We understand that the child lives and thrives in both the family home and the ELC service. This underpins our approach to building trusting, nurturing relationships with parents, alongside providing high quality ELC for the child – reducing family anxiety and stress whilst building stronger foundations for the child in a wider context.

Our Offer

“A lack of access to flexible childcare can force parents to choose low quality part-time jobs, trade down roles or leave work altogether, and makes it more difficult for parents at risk of poverty to address skills or education deficits.”

Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Creating an Anti-Poverty Childcare System,

January 2016

The Glasgow offer has been developed to put the needs of children and families first. From a parent perspective, we believe that a flexible, high quality, nurturing ELC offer means that:

- Family needs are understood and accommodated to the best possible extent by nursery leaders and staff teams who routinely engage with parents from the point of the admissions conversation onwards.
- Holistic, trust-based family support and nurture is offered to those families at risk of becoming unable to cope, whenever they interact with ELC services.
- Parental engagement and choice will lie at the centre of our early years system – moving it from a system dictated by the supply of places, to a system that reacts to the demand of parents.
- Parents can expect the same quality, affordable service wherever they choose to access it – a provider neutral approach that lets parents draw on the flexibility offered from different sector providers to find a model that works for them and their family.
- Parents can make straightforward choices through a simpler, easier to use, flexible system for accessing Council provision which in turn, supports a broad range of family needs including supporting the opportunity to take up work or study.

Our Service Model

“Our policy vision will be underpinned by a more progressive service model, which prioritises and safeguards quality provision of ELC while offering parents a greater choice of settings.”

A Blueprint for 2020: The Expansion of Early Learning & Childcare, March 2017

Our future service model for Council provision will be “blueprint ready” – delivering the Scottish Government’s aspirations of the blueprint to give families greater choice, improved access and affordability whilst maintaining a high quality experience for children at the core. Parents will have:

- The opportunity to access services all year round, spreading their child’s statutory entitlement across the year if they wish to do so.
- The opportunity to access half day/whole day sessions with daily flexibility to drop off and collect subject to family circumstances – but always ensuring that the child’s interests and access to early learning are protected within that flexible offer.
- Explore increased options for enhanced flexibility and quality through the growing use of complementary service delivery partnerships (including childminding) potentially offering ELC across different hours and days whilst also providing for wider family childcare needs.
- The opportunity to purchase affordable additional hours – beyond their child’s statutory entitlement – wherever possible, including within funded partner settings as part of our provider neutral approach.
- Parents will have the opportunity to access a service subject to a rigorous quality maintenance and improvement regime, ensuring high quality early learning, childcare and family nurture.
- Finally parents can expect a system that will evolve over time within the context of their needs and the needs of Glasgow’s communities generally.

Next Steps

Glasgow has consistently been a pioneer in the delivery of early learning, childcare and family nurture. Over the last 30 years, the city has sought to invest and increase provision wherever and whenever it has been possible.

As we embark on this new phase of our journey, we have an opportunity to rethink and shape how we can deliver the best possible service to children and families across the city. To deliver the increased entitlement to eligible children across the city, we will prepare to provide almost 17.5m hours every year, across both our own nurseries and those of our partners.

These additional hours are a significant investment for our city and, in October, the First Minister announced a total revenue package of £420m across the country to support local authorities with their delivery plans.

Over the next three years, as we move towards the delivery of 1140 hours of entitlement for our children, we will be seeking to make this vision a reality, ensuring that children and families across the whole of Glasgow benefit from this new service, redesigned around their needs. Key considerations include:

Workforce: Glasgow's vision for the future of our ELC provision will create new opportunities, not only for the children and families benefitting from their increased entitlement, but in the new roles created in nurseries across our city, in both council and independent providers.

Across Glasgow we will require an estimated 1,150 new FTE staff over the next three years to make sure we have the capacity to be able to deliver the increased entitlement. Ensuring we have the right staff based in the right settings will be crucial to the successful delivery of our vision for the future of the service. In addition, under the Scottish Government's Additional Graduate plans, Glasgow will be recruiting an additional 112 graduate positions, supernumerary posts with a specific focus on improving quality, to work in nurseries across the city. These new posts will be focused on areas of deprivation and we will be working to implement these new plans by August 2018.

Glasgow City Council has already begun investing in expanding our workforce and we will continue to look at innovative methods and pathways to ensure that we can attract the right staff to deliver the best experiences for children.

Partners: Glasgow is proud of its strong relationship with funded partners across the city and we know how important it will be to continue to work collaboratively in partnership, to ensure the successful implementation of our vision for ELC across the whole city.

Through an improved commissioning framework we will move towards a truly provider neutral system of service delivery. Put simply, a provider neutral approach is one in which, from a parent's perspective, it is irrelevant who owns and operates a setting that provides ELC entitlement. Regardless of setting and provider, the same level of high quality, flexible, accessible and affordable service should be available.

Infrastructure: With the statutory entitlement almost doubling from 600 hours to 1140 hours, Glasgow will be looking at how we make sure we've got the infrastructure in place to ensure we can deliver our vision.

Glasgow is a diverse city, with a range of different ELC services available. We want to make sure that families, regardless of where they live in our city, can access the same high quality, flexible service so we will focus on ensuring we've got the right service and buildings infrastructure in place as we move towards 2020.

But it's not just all about creating new buildings. We'll be looking at how we can make better use of the outdoors and the buildings already in place across our communities and examining where, through adaptations and extensions, we can grow our current service provision. In the last year alone, we have invested over £3m in settings across the city to increase provision and ensure that we make the best of what we have already.

Phasing: Glasgow is ambitious about its vision. But we realise it can't be put in place overnight.

As we move towards 2020, we will be working with nurseries and services across the city, both local authority and partner providers, as part of a phased introduction of our new vision. We want to make sure we get it right and that it works for families across the whole of the city so we will be launching pilots to inform implementation and ensure that, longer term, we get this right for Glasgow.

Conclusion

Glasgow is clear in what we want to achieve and how we will seek to achieve it. These are the first steps in our ambitious plan to transform the provision of ELC across our city to deliver the best possible service to children and families.

Throughout the expansion programme over the next three years, Glasgow City Council, working alongside our partners across the city, will move towards our vision for childcare and early learning to ensure we are able and ready to deliver the statutory entitlement of 1140 hours of ELC to children across the city by 2020.



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