

PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL

Lifelong Learning Committee

27 May 2015

**Implementation of 600 Hours Early Learning and Childcare (ELCC):
Progress Update****Report by Executive Director (Education and Children's Services)****PURPOSE OF REPORT**

This progress report provides a further update on the implementation of 600 hours of Early Learning and Childcare (ELCC) for children aged three to five years old, as required as part of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. The report also details proposals for future implementation of this statutory provision to ensure further flexibility and choice for families.

Additionally, the report provides an update on the entitlement of ELCC which was extended to other eligible two year olds through secondary legislation under the Act commencing August 2014.

1. BACKGROUND / MAIN ISSUES

- 1.1 A report to update progress with the implementation of 600 hours of ELCC as required as part of the Act for 3-5 year olds, and the implementation of 600 hours ELCC for other eligible two year olds through secondary legislation was approved at Lifelong Learning Committee (LLC) (Report 14/463 refers) on 29 October 2014. The Executive Director (Education and Children's Services) was instructed to provide an update on progress, including details of the number of children taking up entitlement; outline any barriers that may have been experienced by families and propose a range of options for future provision by May 2015.

2. PROGRESS TO DATE

- 2.1 Uptake of ELCC across Perth and Kinross Council (PKC) by 3-5 year olds continued to be high, in line with the uptake of pre-school education in previous sessions, with 2141 children accessing local authority nurseries and 956 attending partner provider centres. Attendance patterns in local authority nurseries remained mostly similar to previous sessions, with families opting for children to access only all morning or all afternoon sessions. However a growing number of families opted to make use of the variety of choices now available; eg in March 2015, 76 children were accessing the option to have a mix of am/pm sessions.

- 2.2 Education and Children's Services (ECS) recognised that families have different needs and preferences and, in order to augment opportunities for further choice, the option of split funding was introduced at the start of session 2014-15. This means children aged 3-5 years could access their entitlement to ELCC in more than one setting. This option proved to be a popular choice for many families, with 110 children accessing two settings at the time of this report being written.
- 2.3 To increase opportunities for working parents to access ELCC across PKC, in January 2015 ECS further increased the number of centres that are in partnership with the Council to provide high quality ELCC from 37 to 39; a total of 6 new centres since August 2014. The two most recent new partner provider centres located in Dunkeld and Aberfeldy have strengthened flexibility and choice in Highland Perthshire. It is planned to continue to increase the number of partner provider centres in the future depending upon the suitability of the applicants.
- 2.4 The announcement of the retiral of the owner of the private nursery in Methven, a current partner provider, was made in January 2015. In response to this reduction of ELCC places in Methven from summer 2015, a local authority nursery will be created in Methven Primary School to meet the needs of this growing community.
- 2.5 Based on data around eligible 2 year olds supplied by the Scottish Government, ECS established Strong Start provision in 12 local authority nurseries across Perth and Kinross. Uptake of these places was slow, therefore a decision was taken in December 2014 to extend the eligibility to 2 year old children for whom the provision of ELCC was seen as a protective factor.
- 2.6 Colleagues in Health and Children and Families' Services have continued to support with the identification of children who are eligible on account of benefits' criteria and also those deemed to be in need. This has made best use of Council resources to support our most vulnerable children.
- 2.7 In March 2015, 95 children were accessing Strong Start provision, including 17 children who were benefitting from the opportunity though families did not qualify via benefits' criteria. The situation remains under continuous review to ensure maximum benefit to young children and families where capacity allows this approach.
- 2.8 Commencing session 2015-16, eligibility will be extended under the Act to include 2 year olds whose families meet free school meals criteria. The Scottish Government predicts that 27% of 2 year olds in Scotland will be eligible.
- 2.9 Eligibility will be extended to those in receipt of the following benefits:
- Income Support (IS).
 - Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (IBJSA).
 - Any income related element of Employment and Support Allowance.

- Child Tax Credit (CTC), but not Working Tax Credit, and income is less than £16,105.
 - Child Tax Credit (CTC) and Working Tax Credit (WTC) and income is less than £6,420.
 - An asylum seeker may be eligible if receiving support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.
 - Universal Credit.
 - Incapacity Benefit or Severe Disablement Allowance.
 - State Pension Credit.
- 2.10 Two year old children who are looked after, under a kinship care order, or with a parent appointed guardian continue to remain eligible also.
- 2.11 Ongoing support around Strong Start provision has been available from Education Support Officers and Early Years Development Teachers for nursery staff and senior management following the focused training sessions delivered at the start of the session. Training on In-Service Day 5 (18 February 2015) was offered to all staff working in nursery, with a focus on Building the Ambition, Curiosity, Inquiry and Creativity. Twilight sessions were conducted for senior managers to complement this staff training.
- 2.12 As required under the Act, a biennial consultation with parents/carers for continuing implementation in future years was carried out across the period 28 November 2014 to 19 December 2014. A total of 495 responses were received, mostly via the electronic survey accessed via the PKC website. The option of using a paper copy version was taken up by some respondees. See Appendix 1 for a summary of results.

3. NEXT STEPS

- 3.1 The low uptake of Strong Start 2 places in 2014-15 could be attributed to factors reported anecdotally such as:
- parents' and carers' reluctance to have their two year olds in nursery;
 - the eligibility criteria with its perceived negative association with worklessness; or
 - the limited access to the initial provision available across geographical areas.
- 3.2 Due to the extended eligibility under the Act, and to further encourage and increase uptake of places, a feasibility study was carried out in a further seven schools with a view to them offering Strong Start places for session 2015-16. Six of these schools have nurseries that are either PKC nursery hubs or extended nursery provision, with full-time places available for the most vulnerable children.
- 3.3 Locating Strong Start provision within these nurseries will support children and families by minimising the number of transitions and by creating earlier opportunities to build relationships within the school community. The suitability of accommodation and geographical location of each school was also considered.

Hub/extended nursery provision:

- Breadalbane Academy (Primary)
- Goodlyburn PS
- Kinross PS
- Letham PS
- Newhill PS
- St John's RC Academy (Primary)

New local authority nursery provision:

- Methven PS

Applications have been submitted to the Care Inspectorate for approval for these nurseries to include provision for 2 year olds.

- 3.4 A pilot study to introduce play assistants to work in local authority nurseries has been in place since the start of this session, August 2014, within City of Perth Early Childhood Centre and the Inch View Primary School nursery class. Two play assistants were appointed to each nursery to work across the middle of each day to enhance the staff team and support consistency in the quality of experiences for children over the staff lunch period.
- 3.5 In order to build workforce capacity at this time of significant demand across the early years and childcare sector, it is proposed to extend the deployment of play assistants more widely across the service. This will not diminish the role of ECPs or teachers but rather encourage a more flexible workforce. Play assistants will support ECPs and teachers in their daily work with children and with ancillary tasks. This will ensure staff:child ratios are met at all times and support the introduction of future models of implementation of 600 hours of ELCC in subsequent years.
- 3.6 The recruitment of play assistants will open up employment opportunities across Perth and Kinross and is expected to attract both qualified staff and also entrants to the early years and childcare sector who wish to gain paid work with the Council, at the same time as studying towards a professional work-based qualification. This will also reinforce career development opportunities for existing PKC employees who may wish to consider a career change.
- 3.7 As part of workforce development planning, those play assistants who wish to progress to gain practitioner qualifications will be encouraged to do so through existing Childcare Strategy Team support routes.
- 3.8 During the first year of implementation of 600 hours of ELCC, a range of informal feedback indicated that some parents/carers may have preferred to have the option of their child attending nursery across the full primary school day to include lunchtime provision. This informed key questions that were asked in the parental consultation about possible future options for 600 hours of ELCC.

- 3.9 The parental consultation confirmed that the majority of parents/carers agreed it would assist them to have a wider range of options around the delivery of 600 hours of ELCC. Furthermore the majority of respondents were not prepared to travel outwith their local areas to access a provision which best suited family needs.
- 3.10 In response to the results of the parental consultation, it is proposed to begin to introduce lunchtime provision from August 2016 in local authority nurseries where there is capacity for children to attend two ELCC sessions on the same day.
- 3.11 This will provide a new option for children accessing 2 sessions of ELCC in the same day to include lunchtime provision, rather than be required to leave the nursery between sessions to have their lunch elsewhere as at present. This full day option of 6 hours 24 minutes will be aligned to finish more closely with the end of the primary school day. Timings for each school nursery will continue to be managed on a locality basis.
- 3.12 The Policy and Guidelines for Admission to Nursery Schools and Classes will be updated to reflect these changes.
- 3.13 Further options to extend flexibility and choice around 600 hours of ELCC, within the mixed economy of provision by local authority nurseries and partner provider centres, will be explored in the next parental consultation to be undertaken no later than December 2016.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The continued implementation of 600 hours of ELCC under the Act requires PKC to increase flexibility and choice for families where possible. To do this we propose the following developments/changes:
- The introduction of additional Strong Start places in new settings, referred to in 3.2 above, will provide a wider range of opportunities and support continuity for eligible 2 year olds and their families across Perth and Kinross.
 - The proposed workforce development to extend the deployment of play assistants within local authority nurseries, referred to in 3.4 – 3.7 above, will build capacity within the staffing cohort.
 - The introduction of the option to access ELCC across a full day of 6 hours 24 minutes to include lunchtime provision from August 2016, referred to in 3.10 above, will further enhance the range of flexibility and choice around 600 hours of ELCC for families.
 - The Policy and Guidelines for Admission to Nursery Schools and Classes will be updated as referred to in 3.12.

4.2 It is recommended the Committee:

- (i) Considers and approves the proposed programme for the next two school sessions (2015-2017) for the continued implementation of 600 hours of ELCC for all 3-5 year olds and all eligible 2 year olds whose parents wish it; and
- (ii) Notes that the situation will be continually reviewed to take account of any changes in legislation and Scottish Government Policy.

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ANNEX

1. IMPLICATIONS, ASSESSMENTS, CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

The undernoted table should be completed for all reports. Where the answer is 'yes', the relevant section(s) should also be completed. Where the answer is 'no', the relevant section(s) should be marked 'not available (n/a)'.

Strategic Implications	Yes / None
Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement	Yes
Corporate Plan	Yes
Resource Implications	
Financial	Yes
Workforce	Yes
Asset Management (land, property, IST)	Yes
Assessments	
Equality Impact Assessment	Yes
Strategic Environmental Assessment	Yes
Sustainability (community, economic, environmental)	Yes
Legal and Governance	Yes
Risk	Yes
Consultation	
Internal	Yes
External	Yes
Communication	
Communications Plan	Yes

1. Strategic Implications

Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement

1.1 This section should set out how the proposals relate to the delivery of the Perth and Kinross Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement in terms of the following priorities:

- (i) Giving every child the best start in life
- (ii) Developing educated, responsible and informed citizens
- (iii) Promoting a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable economy
- (iv) Supporting people to lead independent, healthy and active lives
- (v) Creating a safe and sustainable place for future generations

This report relates to Objective Nos (i), (ii), (iii)

Corporate Plan

1.2 This section should set out how the proposals relate to the achievement of the Council's Corporate Plan Objectives.

The Perth and Kinross Community Plan 2013-2023 and Perth and Kinross Council Corporate Plan 2013/2018 set out five strategic objectives:

- (i) Giving every child the best start in life;
- (ii) Developing educated, responsible and informed citizens;
- (iii) Promoting a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable economy;
- (iv) Supporting people to lead independent, healthy and active lives; and
- (v) Creating a safe and sustainable place for future generations.

This report relates to Objective Nos (i), (ii), (iii)

1.3 The report also links to the Education & Children's Services Policy Framework in respect of the following key policy area:

- Learning: Realising Potential

2. Resource Implications

Financial

2.1 The Head of Finance has been consulted on this update report.

In relation to the implementation of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, for financial years 2014-15 and 2015-16, the ECS Revenue Budget has been increased by a total of £2,526,273. This is made up of £1,707,273 funding to cover the implementation of 600 hours ELCC and £819,000 to cover the extended ELCC entitlement for eligible two year olds.

As well as the Revenue funding detailed above, ECS has also received an additional £3,724,895 of Capital funding for financial years 2014-15 and 2015-16. This is made up of £1,721,295 funding to cover the implementation of 600 hours ELCC and £2,003,600 to cover the extended ELCC entitlement for eligible two year olds.

The progress detailed in this report is contained within the funding allocations outlined above.

All planned future revenue and capital costs will be met within the budget allocated.

Workforce

2.2 The Corporate Human Resources Manager has been consulted in the preparation of this report.

Asset Management (land, property, IT)

2.3 The Depute Director (Environment) has been consulted on this update report.

3. Assessments

Equality Impact Assessment

3.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, the Council is required to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations

between equality groups. Carrying out Equality Impact Assessments for plans and policies allows the Council to demonstrate that it is meeting these duties. The Equality Impact Assessment undertaken in relation to this report can be viewed clicking [here](#).

The Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment process (EqIA) has been undertaken using the Integrated Appraisal Toolkit, it has been determined that the report is:

- (iii) Assessed as **relevant** and the following positive outcomes are expected following implementation:

The ongoing implementation of 600 hours ELCC will promote social inclusion for all by providing extra time for parents and carers to give them the opportunity to access job opportunities, training opportunities and community opportunities to enhance their knowledge and skills and contribute to their local environment.

Parents and carers will be able to access ELCC provision regardless of sex, race, colour, disability, age, creed, marital status, ethnic origin, sexual orientation or gender reassignment.

Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 3.2 The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 places a duty on the Council to identify and assess the environmental consequences of its proposals.

Following a pre-screening assessment using the Integrated Appraisal Toolkit, it has been determined that the proposal will have **no** environmental effects.

However, no action is required as the Act does not apply to the matters presented in this report. This is because the Committee are requested to note the contents of the report only and the Committee are not being requested to approve, adopt or agree to an action or to set the framework for future decisions.

Sustainability

- 3.3 Under the provisions of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 the Council has to discharge its duties in a way which contributes to the achievement of sustainable development. In terms of the Climate Change Act, the Council has a general duty to demonstrate its commitment to sustainability and the community, environmental and economic impacts of its actions.

Following an assessment using the Integrated Appraisal Toolkit, it has been determined that the implementation is likely to contribute positively to the following corporate sustainable development principles:

- A sense of community identity and belonging (Principle 23).
- A wide range of local jobs and training opportunities for all (Principle 12).

- Well-educated people from well-performing local schools, further and higher education and training for lifelong learning (Principle 17).
- All people are socially included and have similar life opportunities (Principle 26).
- Dynamic job and business creation and development (Principle 14)
- Healthy living is actively promoted and the provision of preventative health services maximised (Principle 10).
- Accessible, affordable public, community, voluntary and private services (eg retail, food, commercial, utilities) (Principle 29).

Extended access to ELCC will provide extra time for parents and give them the opportunity to use that time to access job opportunities, training opportunities and community opportunities to enhance their knowledge and skills and contribute to their local environment.

Six new nurseries have been accepted into partnership with the local authority during session 2014-15. The increased entitlement to ELCC is requiring an expanding workforce providing job opportunities at all levels.

Children participating in ELCC will access opportunities to allow them to progress as successful learners, responsible citizens, effective contributors and confident individuals and will provide a strong start for eligible 2 year olds. Family Learning in schools and nurseries promotes development opportunities for family members. Provision of additional childcare will promote a healthy lifestyle to the child and will allow children to participate in programmes supporting and promoting a healthy lifestyle.

Legal and Governance

- 3.4. The Head of Legal Services has been consulted on this update report. The recommendations in the report are consistent with the Council's duties under the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.
- 3.5 The Head of Democratic Services has been consulted on this update report.

Risk

- 3.6 A risk profile has been developed as part of the implementation planning for 600 hours ELCC and is regularly monitored.

4. Consultation

Internal

- 4.1 The following people and groups were sent a copy of the report and asked to make comment: Early Years and Primary Divisional Management Team (School Improvement Services); Head of Education Services (Secondary and Inclusion); Quality Improvement Officers for Inclusion, Education Services' Senior Management Team, Convener of the Employees of Joint Consultative Committee (JCC), Leader of the Teachers' Side of Joint Negotiating Committee for Teachers (JNCT).

External

4.2 Early Years and Early Intervention Programme Board.

5. Communication

5.1 A communications' plan has been developed as part of the implementation planning for 600 hours ELCC and is regularly monitored.

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (and not containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report:

Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 Early Learning and Childcare Statutory Guidance

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0045/00457025.pdf>

7. APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Summary of Results (Parental Consultation)



Early Learning and Childcare Parental Consultation 28 November - 19 December 2014 Summary of Results

Introduction

The aim of this consultation was to understand families' different needs and preferences for Early Learning and Childcare, to help shape the way that this is delivered across Perth and Kinross Council.

This consultation was open from 28 November 2014 to 19 December 2014 and was publicised on the Perth and Kinross Council website and in nurseries and schools. In total, 495 responses were received, but as with most questionnaires, not everybody answered all the questions. Using postcode or local school information it was noted that responses were received from across all of Perth and Kinross' communities. 60% of those who responded had children accessing Early Learning and Childcare in the Perth and Kinross area, with two thirds in local authority nurseries and the remainder in partner providers. This matches the proportion of the different kinds of establishments in the area.

Results

Respondents were asked if it would assist them to have a wider range of options for Early Learning and Childcare and the majority (65%) responded 'Yes'. Those living outwith Perth City area were more likely to respond yes to this question.

Options: As part of the consultation, people were asked if they were in favour of two different options for providing additional early learning and childcare in different ways, as described below:

Option 1: 5 sessions, each week, across the school year, which could include the opportunity for children attending 2 sessions in the same day to have lunchtime provision eg the 5 sessions across the week could be taken on 1 full day with lunchtime provision and 3 half days or the 5 sessions could be taken across 2 full days with lunchtime provision and 1 half day.

Option 2: 5 sessions of 6 hours 30, every fortnight, across the school year with children attending a pattern of set days eg children would attend Monday, Tuesday every week and alternate Wednesdays 9.00-3.30 or Thursday, Friday every week and alternate Wednesdays 9.00-3.30.

The majority (68%) of respondents chose 'Yes' to Option 1. 18% said 'No' and 14% were 'Unsure'. Relating to Option 1, the following can be stated:

- 41 comments related to the need for longer nursery days, with further comments that neither the current provision nor the proposed Option 1 covers a full working day with travel time, and additional childcare would still be necessary to drop off/ pick up children. Others stated the importance of lunch provision for full days.

- Opinions were mostly consistent across Perth and Kinross' communities.

For Option 2, a smaller proportion chose 'Yes' (28%) and the majority (51%) stated 'No'. 21% were 'Unsure'. Relating to Option 2, the following can be stated:

- 27 comments indicated that having a timetable which changed on a fortnightly basis would not only be confusing but would be difficult to arrange additional childcare around.
- For those respondents who answered 'Yes', the majority also answered 'Yes' to Option 1. For people within this segment, there were 37 comments received. Most comments were positive about the increased flexibility, however there were 10 comments stating that full days were not good for young children.
- Again, opinions were mostly consistent across Perth and Kinross' communities.

Travelling to access Early Learning and Childcare which best suits family's needs:

- 52% of respondents were not prepared to travel out with their local area, although 35% said they would. Of those respondents not prepared to travel, the majority stated that they preferred children to attend a local nursery and build relationships with other children who would go on to attend the same primary school. It was also mentioned that they could not travel outwith their local area as they had other children to collect from school.
- Respondents were prepared to travel varying distances dependent on their individual circumstances. Those who were prepared to travel longer distances would do so as long as it is in the same direction as their work. There were also a few comments voicing their concern about travelling longer distances in bad weather/winter.
- Those in the most rural ward, Highland, were least prepared to travel outwith their local area. From the comments it is suggested that this is because they are already travelling considerable distances.

Strong Start 2

Respondents were asked to consider completing this part of the questionnaire if they had a child who would be eligible for two year olds' provision (Strong Start 2). There was a smaller number of responses (51) and therefore care is needed when drawing conclusions.

Interest in applying for a Strong Start 2 place if their child was eligible to meet criteria, 39% of respondents answered 'Yes', 35% answered 'No' and 26% were 'Unsure'. When asked about Options 1 and 2 for Strong Start 2 provision, the lower number of responses and balance of opinions makes it difficult to draw strong conclusions from these results, although more were in favour of Option 1. 15 respondents stated they would be interested in accessing Strong Start 2 provision in a partner provider. Travel opinions and issues were the same as those reported above.

Summary of additional comments received (in order of frequency) about all topics

- 38 respondents stated they also had to use an additional or alternative childcare provider and some therefore felt it would be helpful to consult with them too.
- 23 respondents stated that lunch cover was essential for full day provision.
- 21 respondents suggested that the additional childcare hours should be more flexible and they should be able to subsidise their choice of childcare.
- 13 respondents stated that they were happy with the current provision.
- 12 respondents stated that as they have children at different ages/schools/providers the nursery timings are not helpful for picking up and dropping off other children.

31 March 2015

