

## EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE EXPANSION TO 1140 HOURS

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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#### EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE PROVISION

**Q. What is changing?**

**A.** The provision of Early Learning and Childcare (**ELC**) across Scotland is changing. By 2020 all three and four year olds and around 27% of two year olds will be entitled to 1140 hours of funded ELC provision per year, this almost doubles the current provision.

**Q. How will the 1140 hours be offered?**

**A.** If a parent/carer wishes to access term time provision (38 weeks) the new entitlement equates to approximately 30 hours per week. If a parent/carer wishes to access all year round provision (c 50 weeks per year) this equates to an entitlement of approximately 22 hours per week. As with the current 600 hours entitlement, parents/carers will be able to take up as much or as little of this funded entitlement (i.e. free) as they wish. There will also be the option to pay for additional hours. The table below gives an example of how this could look in practical terms.

<p><b>Term time fixed</b></p> <p>Following school asymmetric opening times (30 hrs per week)  e.g. 8.30am-3.00pm Monday to Thursday and 8.30-12.30pm Friday  e.g. 8.40am-3.15pm Monday to Thursday and 8.40-12.20pm Friday</p>
<p><b>Term time flexible</b></p> <p>Choose hours between 8am-6pm. Up to the limit of the funded entitlement (30 hrs per week).</p>
<p><b>Term time flexible plus extra hours</b></p> <p>Choose hours between 8am-6pm. Additional hours (beyond weekly funded 30 hrs) to be paid for by parent/carer.</p>
<p><b>All year flexible</b></p> <p>Choose hours between 8am-6pm. Up to the limit of the free entitlement (22 hrs per week).</p>
<p><b>All year flexible plus extra hours</b></p> <p>Choose hours between 8am-6pm. Additional hours (beyond weekly free 22 hrs) to be paid for by parent/carer.</p>

**Q. Where can this ELC provision be provided?**

**A.** The ELC can be provided by the local authority, private and third (charity and voluntary) sector. The aim of the new Scottish Government policy is to make ELC

more accessible and flexible, removing some of the constraints of the current system. The expansion of ELC provision is seeking to support more parents/carers in work, training or study through greater choice of provider and patterns of provision that are better aligned with working and study patterns.

**Q. Is Scottish Borders Council planning to continue to use partner providers and childminders to deliver ELC?**

**A.** Scottish Borders Council (**SBC**) plans to continue to use partner providers and childminders to deliver ELC, where parents choose this option. The Scottish Government has been undertaking trials of different ELC models (including blended models) in other local authority areas. The Scottish Government will issue more guidance once they have assessed the trials and we will issue further updates once it is received.

**Q. What is a “blended model”?**

**A.** A blended model is where children will spend time in both an ELC nursery setting and a childminder. The Government has specified that both ELC providers are to work together in a supportive and integrated way to deliver a holistic, high quality learning & development experience for every child. The Scottish Government will issue further guidance once they have assessed the trials various models of ‘blended’ provision. SBC will then issue further updates

**Q. Will there be a limit on the number of settings a parent can use for funded hours – concern about children being in a number of different settings?**

**A.** We are waiting for guidance from Scottish Government about flexibility but what is important is that settings work closely together and ensure smooth transitions and info sharing between settings.

**Q. Will the increased hours be rolled out in phases or will it all start in 2020?**

**A.** SBC has prepared an initial plan for the expansion of its ELC provision, which is to be submitted to the Scottish Government before the end of September 2017. SBC is adopting a phased approach to the introduction of the 1140 hours, as recommended by the Scottish Government. The guidelines state that local authorities require to evidence consideration of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation and rurality to ensure that the families and communities who stand to benefit the most from the expansion benefit first. The initial plan comprises 5 phases:

- Phase 1 – was launched in January 2017 at Philiphaugh Community School, Selkirk. This was a Scottish Government funded trial of increased term time and holiday period ELC provision.
- Phase 2 – From August 2017 the provision of extended hours will operate at the following primary schools
  - Burnfoot
  - Langlee
  - Eyemouth
  - Philiphaugh

- Greenlaw
- Coldstream
- Kirkhope
- Phases 3 - 5 will follow and be implemented by the start of the new school year in 2020. SBC's initial plan will evolve, based on the learnings from Phases 1 and 2 and as further Government Guidance is issued. Significant work will be required to provide the increased ELC provision across the region and it will be vital for SBC to understand what choices parents and carers wish to make regarding ELC. Questionnaires have been sent out to parents and carers. It would be helpful if as many people as possible complete and return the questionnaires. These responses will assist SBC's design the provision of ELC in the Borders, aiming to meet the requirements of parents and carers.

**Q. What are the entitled hours for a parent who chooses a split placement between a Local Authority Nursery offering 1140 hours and a partner provider or childminder who is offering 600 hours?**

**A.** 1140 hours does not become a universal entitlement until 2020. As part of a phased approach delivery the expansion of hours will only available within settings identified in each phase.

**Q. Will parents/carers be able to increase hours during the year if they want to/their needs change?**

**A.** This would be the intention and the aim will be to accommodate parents' wishes as far as possible, subject to spaces being available.

**Q. Will parents/carers be able to bring children 10:00 – 16:00 etc?**

**A.** Possibly. As part of the Phase 1 Trial at Philiphaugh this was an option taken up by some parents and we will be evaluating feedback from the trial on this. We also know that there are number of flexible options in which funded hours can be offered or accessed. We await the publication of Delivering Flexibility Guidance from Scottish Government (early 2008) to assist with designing flexible provision for 2020.

**Q. Will the expansion of hours put some providers out of business?**

**A.** Sustainability of any business is complex and relies on many elements of business planning and varies on an individual basis. Detailed discussion and information on specific situations would be required to understand particular situations. This is why we are encouraging providers to complete and return the surveys to enable evaluation of any likely impact possible.

**Q. Will there be a restriction on the number of hours a day a child can attend?**

**A.** Currently with the 600 hours entitlement there is a requirement for a minimum of two hours and a maximum of eight hours in any one day. As part of our trial phasing we are working to this guidance. We are awaiting Scottish Government guidance as to any parameters for the 1140 hours.

**Q. Would it be possible to buy a two year old place in a Local Authority nursery offering 1140 hours?**

**A.** Discussion direct with the nursery on an individual basis is advisable as this should be possible, but is subject to places/spaces being available for the times required.

**Q. Do providers have to “keep” places for children who are starting later in the year?**

**A.** Discussion direct with the nursery on an individual basis is advisable as different providers operate different models. The local authority does not stipulate any requirements for this.

**Q. How are places allocated?**

**A.** All Scottish Borders children eligible for ELC will be allocated a place in nursery (school or partner provider). This will, where possible be the setting requested however, we cannot guarantee this will be the case. Therefore, it is important to complete the 2<sup>nd</sup> choice setting in the application form. For **school settings** the current process (which is reviewed annually prior to the start of enrolment) is that places are allocated according to the following list of criteria:

- 1 a) Children considered in need or receipt of statutory care and protection measures
- b) Children supported by significant multi-agency involvement
- c) Children referred by educational psychologist
  
2. Children continuing in the same nursery (including approved deferred entry by Scottish Borders Council)
3. Children who were eligible from age 2 (ELC2 onwards)
4. Children with sibling in the nursery/ school (oldest first)
5. All other eligible children who reside in Scottish Borders (oldest first)
6. Children who reside out-with Scottish Borders Council (oldest first).  
Children will be offered a place in accordance with any agreement between their own local Council and Scottish Borders Council.

**Partner Provider** settings have their own admissions policies which will be available on request

## **EDUCATION, SKILLS AND LEARNING**

**Q. What should I be considering as a potential provider?**

**A.** As a provider you are best placed to know your business model and how your review this. However you may find it helpful to consider the following:-

- Does your current service meet the needs of parents and carers in your community?
- Do the hours of operation meet their needs and your/your staff needs?
- Are you working to capacity or is there room for expansion?
- What works well currently and could anything be done better?
- What will change with the introduction of 1140 hours?

- Identify opportunities for potential development, collaboration, partnership working

**Q. What support is there for doing training and qualifications and what are the expectations about qualifications for childminder?**

**A.** Scottish Government has not yet stated what their expectations for childminders will be other than the need for the ELC workforce to be highly skilled and qualified.

The will be implications resulting from the changes to the Individual Learning Accounts – there may not be so much funding available for training through this route. Meanwhile SBC will continue to provide funding for staff in all sectors to undertake qualifications and mandatory training as it always has, as long as budget is available.

**Q. What happens to childminders who don't want to do a qualification?**

**A.** The Scottish Government is working with Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA), the Care Inspectorate, the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) and other key delivery partners to consider, as part of the best practice standard for childminders, the potential for a requirement for those childminders delivering the funded ELC entitlement to be qualified to the same level as an ELC practitioner. We are awaiting the outcome of this policy work and associated guidance.

**Q. Will parents still be able to use childminders who don't have a qualification?**

**A.** Yes but possibly not to access funded places. Awaiting further information on qualifications for childminders to be provided by the Scottish Government (as above)

## QUALITY

**Q. If a provider doesn't meet the new quality standard but is the provider of parental choice can they still be used for funded hours?**

**A.** We await the issue of Scottish Government Quality Action Plan in October which will set out what more needs to be done to strengthen quality in Early Learning and Childcare. In addition to findings and guidance from a new Service Models Working Group (SMWG) which is responsible for developing a Funding Follows the Child approach alongside new national standard for funded provider status.

**Q. How will parents know if a provider is not meeting the quality standard and what will be the timescale for improving?**

**A.** We await the issue of Scottish Government Quality Action Plan in October which should set out the timescale and process for addressing this.

**Q. Can parents find out what grades providers have got at inspections?**

**A.** Yes, all inspection documents are public documents and are available on line.

## **ENGAGEMENT AND INVOLVEMENT**

**Q. Why are partner providers not involved in the initial expansion of hours currently taking place?**

**A.** There has been limited funding from the Scottish Government for the initial phases as the expansion does not come into force until August 2020. SBC is following the Government guidance by phasing in its delivery of the increased provision to ensure that the families who stand to benefit most from the expansion benefit first. The Government guidelines will provide more details once they are issued.

**Q. What should childminders and partner providers be doing now to prepare for the expansion in ELC?**

**A.** Childminders and partner providers should continue to work as they are and strive to improve quality, particularly in terms of the Curriculum for Excellence, Early Level. Please respond to surveys and requests for information from SBC to enable us to understand your business, the current provision across the Borders and the future possibilities. Providers should also consider their business models in light of the legislative change and future Government guidance regarding ELC.

**Q. What opportunities will there be to become a partner provider in 2020?**

**A.** We have a robust procurement tendering process in place which enables new providers to apply on an annual basis to be part of the framework. We are however awaiting new guidance from the Scottish Government on “funded provider” status.

**Q. How can we continue to be involved in the process?**

**A.** Please respond to any questions/surveys from SBC. We will continue to work to the timescales set by the Scottish Government and consult as required. We are looking at a range of ways for you to be involved e.g. forums, twilight meetings, newsletters etc. and would welcome your feedback on the method(s) of communication you would prefer.

**Q. Will I be told about the results of the surveys?**

**A.** Yes – SBC will produce and publish a plan alongside the results of questionnaires for childminders and existing commissioned partner providers.

**Q. Will we see the draft plan and be invited to comment on it before it's submitted to Scottish Government?**

**A.** The timescales, at this stage will not enable wider feedback and comment on this initial plan. However this will be a working document which will evolve over time and initial plans may be subject to change as further information emerges e.g. Scottish Government guidance, documentation, learning from trials and funding allocations. Therefore further dialogue and partnership working will help shape this further.

**Q. Will the questionnaire be available in other languages?**

**A.** Yes on request

**Q. What if I have further questions or comments after this session?**

**A.** If you have any other questions to add, e-mail them to the Early Learning mailbox [earlyyearsteamed@scotborders.gcsx.gov.uk](mailto:earlyyearsteamed@scotborders.gcsx.gov.uk) and we will provide an answer and add it to a list of FAQs list which will be updated and distributed at each session