

**THE EXPANSION OF FUNDED EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE IN
SCOTLAND – ARGYLL AND BUTE EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE
UPDATED DELIVERY PLAN**

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update for members on the progress being made by the Education Service in preparing for the expansion of Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) and the implementation of 1140 hours of funded ELC in Argyll and Bute by August 2020.

1.2 Specifically the report provides information on:

- The ongoing progress towards full implementation of 1140 hours.
- Success of implementation to date.

1.3 As we have progressed with implementation the following factors have informed changes to the Delivery Plan:

- Consultation with parents, partners, practitioners and community groups, and
- Ongoing work with property and catering colleagues.

1.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Community Services Committee:

- Note the progress of implementation to date;
- Endorse the positive steps the Early Years Team has taken in partnership with colleagues from other services in implementing 1140 hours across Argyll and Bute;
- Request that the Executive Director with responsibility for Education brings forward progress updates in relation to the Expansion of Early Learning and Childcare to future meetings of the Community Services Committee.

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2.0 INTRODUCTION

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3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

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4.0 DETAIL

4.1 Progress towards full implementation of 1140 hours

The Scottish Government announced as a policy commitment the expansion of the provision of funded ELC from 600 hours to 1140 hours by August 2020.

The priority for the expansion to 1140 hours is to improve children's outcomes and close the poverty-related attainment gap. In addition, the expansion aims to support parents into work, study or training. The Scottish Government's four principles of the ELC expansion are: quality, flexibility, affordability, and accessibility.

Scottish Government has stated that quality is 'at the heart' of the expansion and that achieving a high-quality ELC experience for children is a key objective.

The theory of change for the expansion is that, by delivering ELC that is high-quality, flexible, affordable and accessible, parents will be encouraged to take up their child's entitlement to funded ELC, especially those from the least advantaged backgrounds. In turn, children's development will improve, the poverty-related attainment gap will narrow and more parents will be able to work, study or train.

The 1140 hours of ELC will be offered by a range of providers across Argyll Bute, including Local Authority, Private, Voluntary, Independent and Childminders.

4.2 Settings phased in by October 2020

Area	Setting Type	Phased in by October 2019	January 2020	August 2020
Cowal and Bute	Local Authority	5	10	11
	Funded Partner Provider	4	6	6
	Funded Partner Childminder	0	1	1
Helensburgh and Lomond	Local Authority	6	6	7
	Funded Partner Provider	9	9	9
	Funded Partner Childminder	7	7	7
Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands	Local Authority	20	21	21
	Funded Partner Provider	3	3	4
	Funded Partner Childminder	5	5	5
Oban Lorn and The Isles	Local Authority	6	6	21
	Funded Partner	0	0	5

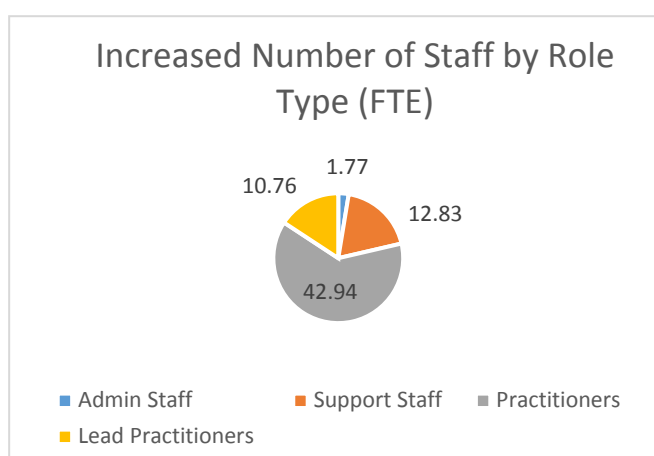
	Provider			
	Funded Partner Childminder	0	0	3

In January 2020 a further 5 Local Authority settings, 2 Partner Providers and 1 Child Minder will phase in to 1140 hours in Dunoon.

From January, 7 months ahead of the deadline of August 2020, 76% of settings across Argyll and Bute will be phased in to 1140 hours.

4.3 Staffing

As a result of the expansion work we have increased the number of staff as illustrated below.



A total of 74.30 FTE new posts.

By August 2020 we will have phased in all 60 Local Authority settings, 24 Partner Providers and 16 Child Minders although it is expected that the number of Child Minders delivering 1140 hours will increase.

We are working with the Scottish Child Minders Association to promote childminding as a career with a view to recruit more childminders in all localities.

The 1140 hours Phasing Plan detailing settings is attached in Appendix 1.

4.4 Finance

To support partner Providers and Child Minders prepare for 1140 hours and ensure indoor and outdoor environments are of a good quality grants of £15,000 have been offered to every Nursery and £1,000 to each Child Minder delivering ELC.

The total capital budget allocated was £6,790,000 to date £6,480,112 is committed with a balance of £309,887. The Capital spend must be committed by April 2020 and we are on track.

We have increased the hourly rate for 3 and 4 year olds in partner providers from £4.45 to £5.31. In addition we are undertaking an exercise to check that this rate is sustainable and reflects national policy priorities, including funding to enable payment of the real Living Wage to all childcare workers delivering the funded entitlement. The Early Years Team are supported in this exercise by finance, procurement and the Research and Engagement Officer.

4.5 Developing Workforce

To support the quality of deliver of 1140 hours the Early Years Team offers an extensive training catalogue (exemplified in Appendix 2) free to staff working in Local Authority and Partner Providers. By September 2019, 1546 practitioners across all settings requested training compared with 1253 requests in total for 2018/19.

4.6 Support for High Quality Provision

The Early Years Team have developed the Three Assets Approach to curriculum design (Appendix 3) that will be used to support practitioners and settings to get back to the core of Curriculum for Excellence, taking a holistic approach to learning in a meaningful context which nurture wellbeing, strengthens connections, encourages exploratory drive and develops competences and life skills.

Three new teacher posts have been created to work across our Partner Provider Nurseries to ensure children in these settings have equality of access to a teacher. Each setting receives the equivalent teaching time to that provided in our LA settings.

Seven Cluster Lead posts have been created and are working across a total of 35 settings. The aim of these posts is to contribute to improving the quality of early learning and childcare provided to children living in the most deprived areas, and ultimately to contribute to closing the attainment gap in cognitive, social and emotional development between children living in the least and most deprived areas. Recent inspections have recognised the positive impact these posts are having particularly in supporting outdoor learning, literacy, numeracy and practitioner engagement.

To ensure succession planning we have recruited 12 Modern apprentices (including 2 Gaelic Medium) and 2 Graduate apprentices. 42 young people across 6 of our secondary schools are undertaking a Foundation Apprenticeship in Early Learning and Child Care.

4.7 Partnership Working

We continue to work closely with colleagues in property to ensure we deliver 24 refurbishments, 4 extensions and one modular build that are required to deliver 1140 hours. Appendix 4 illustrates the proposed floor plan for the

repurposed Willow View nursery and office space in Oban and photographs from the new nursery at Cardross Primary and Aqualibrium in Campbeltown.

Colleagues in catering continue to work alongside the Early Years team to ensure that by August 2020 all children receive a two course meal that meets the national requirements. To date 55 settings are receiving this meal service. (appendix 5)

We are an active member of the Northern Alliance Early Years work stream in which we share learning as part of the expansion of ELC across the Northern Alliance Regional Improvement Collaborative with a focus on quality.

5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 This paper outlines the progress across Argyll and Bute phasing in 1140 hours of ELC for approval of Community Services Committee.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Policy – The phasing in of 1140 hours will assist the Education Service to implement the relevant sections contained within the Children and Young People Act (Scotland) 2014.
- 6.2 Financial – Funding from Scottish Government is adequate in allowing Argyll and Bute Council to phase in 1140 hours.
- 6.3 Legal – The phasing in of 1140 hours is assisting the Education Service to implement the relevant sections contained within the Children and Young People Act (Scotland) 2014.
- 6.4 HR – Workforce development and recruitment is required to continue to deliver the expectations set out in the Delivery Plan.
- 6.5 Fairer Scotland Duty – There are no potential issues around this.
 - 6.5.1 Equalities - protected characteristics – The Delivery Plan aims to respond to the challenge of reducing inequality and improving outcomes for children and their families within the diverse geographical and social context of Argyll and Bute.
 - 6.5.2 Socio-economic Duty – 1140 hours must be free at the point of entry there. By August 2020 all children in ELC will receive a free healthy and nutritious meal.
 - 6.5.3 Islands – Almost all of our islands are already delivering 1140 hours
- 6.6. Risk – A number of risks exist with workforce recruitment and development, provision of a free meal by 2020 and, as yet unknown levels of uptake within communities.
- 6.7 Customer Service – Our youngest children and eligible 2 year olds will benefit most from the expansion of ELC. There are significant benefits for families with

parents/carers able to use the extended hours to enable them to return to employment, reduce childcare costs and access training

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 1140 hours Phasing Plan

Appendix 2 Training Catalogue

Appendix 3 Three Assets Approach to curriculum design

Appendix 4 Floor Plans

Appendix 5 Menus