

**THE EXPANSION OF FUNDED EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE IN  
SCOTLAND– ARGYLL AND BUTE EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE UPDATE**

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**1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update 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.

1.2

Specifically the report provides information on:

- Removal of the statutory duty to deliver 1140 hours of ELC from August 2020
- The ongoing progress towards full implementation of 1140hrs.
- Success of implementation to date.

1.3

As we have progressed with implementation the following factors have informed changes to our planned delivery:

- Impact of COVID-19, the Scottish Government have removed the statutory duty to complete the implementation of 1140 hours of ELC available to each eligible child from 1 August 2020.
- Consultation with parents, partners, practitioners and community groups, and
- Ongoing work with property and catering colleagues.

1.4

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that Business Continuity Committee:

- Note that the Scottish Government have of April 2020 removed the statutory duty to complete the implementation of 1140 hours of ELC available to each eligible child from 1 August 2020;
- Note Education and Property Service have continued to progress the expansion plans where possible and will be in a position to resume key projects as soon as restrictions on lockdown are lifted;
- Endorse the significant work the Early Years Team has undertaken in partnership with colleagues from other services in ensuring 1140hrs could be implemented across Argyll and Bute from August 2020 were

- there no COVID-19 restrictions;
- Note the progress of implementation to date;
  - 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 as more information is provided from Scottish Government.

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## **2.0 INTRODUCTION**

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2.2 Specifically the report provides information on:

- Removal of the statutory duty to deliver 1140 hours of ELC from August 2020.
- The ongoing progress towards full implementation of 1140hrs.
- Success of implementation to date.

2.3 As we have progressed with implementation the following factors have informed changes to our planned delivery:

- Impact of COVID-19, the Scottish Government have removed the statutory duty to complete the implementation of 1140 hours of ELC available to each eligible child from 1 August 2020.
- Consultation with parents, partners, practitioners and community groups, and
- Ongoing work with property and catering colleagues.

## **3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

3.1 It is recommended that Business Continuity Committee:

- Note that the Scottish Government have of April 2020 removed the statutory duty to complete the implementation of 1140 hours of ELC available to each eligible child from 1 August 2020;
- Note Education and Property Service have continued to progress the expansion plans where possible and will be in a position to resume key projects as soon as restrictions on lockdown are lifted;
- Endorse the significant work the Early Years Team has undertaken in

partnership with colleagues from other services in ensuring 1140hrs could be implemented across Argyll and Bute from August 2020 were there no COVID-19 restrictions;

- Note the progress of implementation to date;
- 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 as more information is provided from Scottish Government.

## **4.0 DETAIL**

### **4.1 Progress towards full implementation of 1140hrs**

The Scottish Government announced as a policy commitment the expansion of the provision of funded ELC from 600 hours to 1140 hours by 2020. However, it should be noted that due to the impact of COVID-19, the Scottish Government have of April 2020 removed the statutory duty to complete the implementation of 1140 hours of ELC available to each eligible child from 1 August 2020. Education and Property Service have continued to progress the expansion plans where possible and will be in a position to resume key projects as soon as restrictions on lockdown are lifted. A number of refurbishments are now likely to be delayed until next summer but this will not affect our ability to deliver 1140hours from August should the COVID-19 situation allow.

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 and Bute, including Local Authority, Private, Voluntary, Independent and Childminders.

### **4.2 Phasing by locality**

#### **Helensburgh and Lomond**

100% of children in the locality have access to 1140 hours from partner, LA and childminder settings. 1140 hours could continue across Helensburgh and Lomond from August.

New setting at Rosneath - when construction restarts works restart it will take 5 weeks to complete. If not completed by August registered children can be accommodated at Kilcreggan or Kiddlywinks.

Refurb at Garelochhead was being prepared for planning, we have agreed to move this project to summer 2021 as 1140 hours is already being delivered. This will allow property to focus on other projects.

### **Bute and Cowal**

100% of children in the locality have access to 1140 hours from partner and LA settings. 1140 hours can continue across Bute and Cowal from August.

Planning application decision is due for Silver Birch Outdoor Nursery in Hunters Quay, Dunoon. This project remains a priority and projected completion is now projected as August.

### **Mid Argyll, Kintyre and Islay**

100% of children in the locality have access to 1140 hours from partner, LA settings and Childminders. 1140 hours can continue across MAKI from August.

Kilmartin school community have agreed a new plan that benefits not just the ELC, but also the school. This will be delivered in summer 2021. Parents can continue to access 1140 hours as a blended placement with other settings.

We are awaiting the planning permission for Kilmory Outdoor Nursery, this remains a priority for completion by August.

Inveraray Primary ELC, the contractor has been identified and can be onsite when restrictions allow. The completion date is now October 2020. 1140 hours is being delivered.

Port Charlotte Primary ELC, due to capacity issues in property a decision was reached to delay the planned work until Summer 2021. 1140 hours is and can be delivered, this work is to relocate the ELC into the main building and remove a temporary structure. We will however go to tender by December 2020 to ensure a contractor is in place.

### **Oban, Lorn and the Isles**

Tiree, Tobermory, Lismore, Iona, Easdale and Dalmally are all delivering 1140 hours and can from August.

With current restrictions it is unlikely that the Health and Social Care Partnership staff based at Willow View can be moved to the alternative accommodation. As a result the completion date for this new standalone setting is not known.

Contact has been made with our partner providers in Oban who can accommodate children who would have been due to attend Willowview.

Dunbeg planning application has been granted. Tender document is being prepared and we are aware modular companies are still operating. Once on site

this project will take up to 7 weeks to complete and remains a priority to open in August to ensure 1140 could be delivered across Oban.

Lochnell Primary ELC is another priority. The building warrant is being sought and billing proceeding to allow us to go to tender. If this work can't be progressed this summer 1140 hours could still be delivered.

Salen Primary English and Gaelic Medium ELC, planning is in place, building warrant being sought and a consultant being used to progress more quickly to tender. If a contractor submits a tender within budget, subject to COVID 19, it is possible to complete this project by end of October. A landscape architect has been commissioned to create a high quality secure outdoor area to allow separation between Gaelic and English medium ELC. Care Inspectorate have agreed to this and increased the registered places from 20 to 24. This solution could run for the full academic year offering 1140hrs if needed.

Taynuilt Primary ELC contractor is in place ready to start subject to COVID 19. This project will require 7 weeks access with no children.

Strath of Appin Primary ELC is ready to go to tender. If tendered within budget and a confidence in the contractor's ability to deliver in a 7 week period we will proceed, COVID 19 dependant. Otherwise we will delay until summer 2021.

It is anticipated that we can offer all children 1140 hours across OLI. Within Oban some parents will not get their first or second choice due to the delay on Willowview.

All parents will have their child's nursery setting confirmed by June. However, the start date and pattern of attendances can only be subsequently confirmed and are COVID 19 dependant.

#### **4.3 Staffing**

We are continuing with recruitment and expect to have all required staff in post by August 2020 with the exception of Willow View which we will begin recruitment for in June.

#### **4.4 Finance**

To support Partner Providers and Child Minders and ensure they are financially viable for 1140 hours we have made an upfront payment for their services until the end of July, in line with national guidance.

From August 2020, in line with the new Early Years National Standards, we will pay our Partner Providers and Child Minders at the start of each calendar month.

We have increased the hourly rate for 3 and 4 year olds in partner providers from £4.45 to £5.31. In addition we have undertaken an exercise to check 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 and are currently analyzing the seven responses made.

#### **4.5 Developing Workforce**

To support the quality of deliver of 1140 hours the Early Years Team offers an extensive training catalogue free to staff working in Local Authority and Partner Providers.

#### **4.6 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. The Appendix illustrates these updated plans.

Colleagues in catering continue to work alongside the Early Years team to review plans to ensure that by any new statutory deadline to deliver 1140 hours that all children can receive a two course meal that meets the national requirements.

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 and more recently on COVID-19.

### **5.0 CONCLUSION**

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

### **6.0 IMPLICATIONS**

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| 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. By any new deadline, all children in ELC will receive a free healthy and nutritious meal.

6.5.3 Islands By August we could deliver 1140 hours across our island settings.

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

**Douglas Hendry**

**Executive Director with responsibility for Education Services**

**Anne Paterson**

**Head of Education: Lifelong Learning & Support and Chief Education Officer**

**Councillor Yvonne McNeilly**

**Policy Lead for Education and Lifelong Learning**

#### **For further information contact:**

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#### Appendices

Appendix 1: Argyll and Bute Early Years 1140 Hours Phasing Plan