



**Glasgow City Council**

**Education, Skills and Early Years City Policy Committee**

**Report by Executive Director of Education Services**

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**ELC CONSULTATION 2021**

**Purpose of Report:**

To update Committee on the outcome of the statutory Early Learning & Childcare Consultation which was completed in December 2021.

**Recommendations:**

Committee is asked to consider and note the responses received to the 2021 ELC Consultation.

Ward No(s):

Citywide: ✓

Local member(s) advised: Yes  No

consulted: Yes  No

## **1 Background**

- 1.1 The Children & Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 sets out a statutory duty for all local authorities to consult with parents and carers on the provision of early learning and childcare (ELC) services and out of school childcare (OSC) services every two years and, subsequently, report back on the results and what actions they intend to take to address the issues raised.
- 1.2 Glasgow City Council currently runs 110 nurseries across the city, offering a range of different opening times and services to suit individual family needs. In addition, 130 Funded Providers operate across the city, comprising a mix of private, 3<sup>rd</sup> sector and independent school providers offering both statutory funded and additional, parent funded, ELC services.

There are also 55 Registered Childminders who offer statutory funded ELC places. As at 14 February 2022, 14,384 children were accessing an ELC place in a nursery or with a Registered Childminder on the ELC framework within Glasgow.

- 1.3 There are 90 OSC providers across the city offering places for c. 5,000 children aged 5-12 years. The Council does not directly provide or commission any OSC services. The majority are delivered by the 3<sup>rd</sup> sector with the small remaining number being privately operated. No government funding is received to support OSC, however, the Council offers significant support to the sector through subsidised lets for those in school accommodation, access to CPD and funding for required certificated qualifications and by running an annual conference for the OSC sector providers.
- 1.4 In 2019, the Scottish Government published a draft national framework for OSC which it subsequently issued widely for consultation. Glasgow City Council was highlighted in the draft national framework as an example of good practice in terms of local authority support for OSC services. The Programme for Government 2021/2022 includes a commitment under the Tackling Poverty theme, to expand OSC services over the next 5 years with a focus on making these free of charge for the poorest families.
- 1.5 Education Services last carried out a statutory consultation exercise on the provision of ELC and OSC services in 2019. The 2019 consultation was an important part of the planning process for the increase in the entitlement to funded ELC hours from 600 to 1140 hours, originally planned for implementation in August 2020 but delayed nationally until August 2021 due to the impact of Covid 19. The 2019 exercise, as with the prior 2017 and 2015 exercises, showed an increasing demand from parents for full year, extended day ELC services which supported their ability to work.
- 1.6 It should be noted that, in addition to this statutory consultation process, Education Services regularly consults with children, families and funded providers on an ongoing basis in a local context relating to service delivery matters. This has been particularly true over the last few years given the significant changes underway across the sector due to the 1140 expansion programme.

## **2 Consultation Process**

- 2.1 The consultation exercise was run throughout November and December 2021 as an online survey. In order to increase participation across the city, it was heavily promoted through the Council's social media channels and promoted by staff working across Council and Funded Provider nurseries and OSC services. The consultation was aimed at parents/carers accessing either ELC or OSC enabling respondents to contribute to both.

- 2.2 As the ELC expansion to 1140 hours was fully implemented in August 2021, the focus of the survey was to gather parent input on their use of services, the ease with which they had been able to find a service, the information provided about services and the reasons why they had chosen a particular service. Parents were also asked how likely they would be to choose to defer their child's entry to primary school when an additional funded year in nursery becomes an automatic entitlement for all with children born between the start of term in August and the end of February,

### **3 Consultation Responses**

- 3.1. Broadly, the responses across the consultation survey are positive about both ELC and OSC services across Glasgow. The full report will be published on the Glasgow Family Information Service website, however, a summary is provided below.
- 3.2 A total of 684 responses were received to the consultation which is around 2/3<sup>rd</sup> of the response seen in 2019, prior to the full implementation of the 1140 hours expansion and before the Covid 19 pandemic. Of the responses 521 related to families using ELC services and 163 using OSC services.

Parents / carers represented 96.2% of respondents with grandparents and other interested parties making up the remainder. Over 96% of responses were from Glasgow residents with the rest coming from those living in other local authority areas but using services in Glasgow.

61.1% of responses came from families with an income of less than £45,000pa and within that number, 30.2% had an annual income of less than £20,000.

### **3.3 ELC Responses**

Within the ELC sector, 69% of the responses came from families using Council nursery provision 29.7% using a private nursery; 3.2% using a playgroup or other voluntary sector nursery ; and 1.8% using a Registered Childminder.

Most of the ELC responses (85%) came from families of children who were eligible to access the 1140 hours entitlement and 85.7% were accessing their full entitlement. The remaining 15% of ELC responses came from families with very young children, under 3 years old. Across all of the ELC responses, most families were accessing 3 or more days per week in nursery with 237 (45.5% of total) accessing 5 days per week.

More than half (53.4%) accessed nursery over a full year basis and the individual responses indicated further demand for this type of service – which is in line with consultation responses received since 2014 when the statutory duty to consult was introduced.

- 3.4 Responses indicated that services being local and high quality were the most important features for families when it came to choosing a nursery. Fewer respondents indicated a concern about cost than in previous consultations, which may reflect the impact of the increase in funded hours available.

For those accessing 1140 hours, 49.8% said their costs had been reduced, 27.7% that work /study was easier to manage and 22.3% had been able to take up work or do additional work due to longer hours in nursery. Importantly, 44.1% felt that their child's development and learning had improved as a result of more time in nursery, with only 10.6% saying that the extra hours had made no difference to them.

- 3.5 Over 68% of responses said that it had been very or fairly easy to find a service but 19% said it had been very or fairly difficult. Where families had found it difficult the most common reasons were either demand for places, especially where a place for a baby was being sought; delays in start dates due to Covid 19; having to wait a long time to know if they had a place or not.
- 3.6 Nearly 30% of families said that they would be very or fairly likely to take advantage of an extra funded deferred year in nursery when it became an automatic entitlement for all, with a further 26.1% saying they were not sure what they would choose.

### **3.7 OSC Responses**

In relation to OSC services, 24% of respondents used some form of school aged childcare with over 90% of those using a registered OSC provider. Fewer families with school aged children used services all year round (41.4%) with around 55% choosing a term-time service.

- 3.8 Over the holidays, some families indicated that they used summer activity clubs (mainly sports clubs), informal care from relatives or shared their own and their partner's annual leave as they could not afford the cost of full time OSC during periods when the school was closed.
- 3.9 Cost of services and lack of available places were described as the biggest barriers within the OSC sector and nearly 80% of responses indicated that families would use services should they be expanded and made affordable / free to those on low incomes.

## **4 Next Steps**

- 4.1 A key element of the consultation process, as outlined in the legislation, is for the Council to report on what it proposes to do in response to the issues raised by parents/carers.
- 4.2 The responses to the consultation made it clear that the Council is on the right track and that the expansion to 1140 hours has been well received – particularly given the demand for full year services. It is also clear that there is an unmet demand for more and cheaper services for children under 3 years old and for OSC services.
- 4.3 Parents of nursery aged children told us that better information was important to them. In particular, nearly 65% wanted more information about the options for ELC, about the nursery application process, about any costs or charges and about specialist services such as Gaelic medium or additional support for learning services.
- 4.4 In response we will review and update the online Glasgow Family Information Service to make it easier for parents to access the information they want. We will also review our nursery admissions processes to give parents information on the outcome of their application more quickly.
- 4.5 With regard to OSC services, we will continue to work with Scottish Government as they formulate their plans to expand the OSC sector and will work locally with the city's OSC providers to support them to meet the expectations of any expansion. As a starting point, the focus of the 2022 OSC conference will be the future expansion of services.

## 5 Policy and Resource Implications

### Resource Implications:

*Financial:* No direct financial implications arising from the consultation itself, however, no detail has yet been released with regard to funding to support the OSC expansion.

*Legal:* None.

*Personnel:* None

**Council Strategic Plan :** Excellent and inclusive Education  
A well governed City that listens and responds

### Equality and Socio-Economic Impacts :

*Does the proposal support the Council's Equality Outcomes 2021-25? Please specify.* N/A

*What are the potential equality impacts as a result of this report?* N/A

*Please highlight if the policy/proposal will help address socio-economic disadvantage.*

### Climate Impacts:

*Does the proposal support any Climate Plan actions? Please specify:* N/A

*What are the potential climate impacts as a result of this proposal?* N/A

*Will the proposal contribute to Glasgow's net zero carbon target?* N/A

**Privacy and Data Protection Impacts:** None

## **6 Recommendations**

- 6.1 Committee is asked to consider and note the responses received to the 2021 ELC Consultation.