

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCILEDUCATION COMMITTEE25 August 2022Report by Director of EducationIMPROVING OUTCOMES – A LONGITUDINAL STUDY OF THE IMPACT OF 1140 HOURS**PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. To inform Education Committee of the West Partnership's planned evaluation of 1140 hours of early learning and childcare (ELC).

**RECOMMENDATION**

2. Education Committee is asked to note the planned West Partnership evaluation of 1140 hours.

**BACKGROUND**

3. The Scottish Government set a transformational agenda for Early Learning and Childcare by 2020 which was published in March 2017. The vision was to almost double the entitlement of free ELC from 600 hours to 1140 hours per year by 2020 for all 3 and 4 year olds and eligible 2 year olds and is underpinned by the key principles of Quality, Flexibility, Accessibility and Affordability.

4. The Scottish Government announced on March 2020, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, their decision to remove the statutory duty on education authorities to make 1140 hours of early learning and childcare (ELC) available to each eligible child from August 2020.

5. A new implementation date of August 2021 was set.

6. The Glasgow City Region Education Improvement Collaborative (West Partnership) is a collaboration of eight local authorities across the West of Scotland: East Dunbartonshire, East Renfrewshire, Glasgow City, Inverclyde, North Lanarkshire, Renfrewshire, South Lanarkshire, and West Dunbartonshire.

7. The West Partnership Early Years Network in partnership with the Evaluating and Reporting Group were keen to explore in detail how this increased ELC offer improves outcomes for children and families by undertaking an evaluation over an extended period of time.

**REPORT**

8. During school session 2020 – 2021, all 8 local authorities who make up the West Partnership began to provide 1140 hours of early learning and childcare prior to the statutory duty date, with most providing from August 2020.

9. This increased offer to children and families in the West Partnership was designed to make a real difference and improve outcomes in terms of attainment, wellbeing and employment.

10. With children spending increased time in early learning and childcare, the officers were keen that the evaluation was designed to explore what it means in terms of Curriculum for Excellence and the early level, with findings informing pedagogical approaches across the early level (ELC & Primary 1) in West Partnership establishments.

11. All parents and carers in Scotland have the legal right to defer their child's entry to primary school if they are not yet 5 years old at the beginning of the school year. In the current system, the youngest children (those with a January or February birth date) are automatically entitled to an additional year of funded early learning and childcare, when they defer their primary one start.

12. The Scottish Government has laid legislation in the Scottish Parliament which will mean that, from August 2023, all children with an August to December birthday who defer will automatically be able to access funded ELC.

13. The findings from the West Partnership 1140 Evaluation will complement the collaborative work being undertaken across the 8 local authorities to ensure the early level curriculum continues to meet the needs of learners as they potentially have 3 years of ELC before beginning primary school.

14. An evaluation proposal (appendix 1) was developed in collaboration with the West Partnership Early Years Network and shared with the West Partnership Board in February and the Glasgow City Region Education Committee in March 2022. The proposal was approved as well as a recommendation to establish an advisory group.

15. An advisory group has been established to advise on the direction of this work with regular updates being presented to the Early Years Network and West Partnership Governance Board. A copy of the remit of this group can be found as appendix 2 of this document.

## **FINANCE AND EFFICIENCY**

16. To support and take forward this research, a full-time research assistant has been recruited. The cost of this post is being met within the West Partnership's budget.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

17. Education Committee is to note the planned West Partnership evaluation of 1140 hours.

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August 2022

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# WEST PARTNERSHIP 1140 EVALUATION PROPOSAL



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## Introduction

Entitlement to funded early learning and childcare (ELC) has extended over the past 2 decades. At its outset, in 2002, all 3-year-olds were entitled to 412.5hrs of funded childcare. This figure was first increased to 475 hrs (2007), then to 600 hours (2014) and more recently to 1140hrs. The recent increase to 1140 hrs marks a 90% increase in entitlement, a significantly more ambitious extension than those that occurred in 2007 (15%) and 2014 (26%). From 2014 the policy was also extended to 'eligible 2-year olds', which allowed those facing particular disadvantages to access the entitlement earlier than the usual entry point (3 years of age). The Scottish Government provide three 'principal outcomes' for extending ELC entitlement:

1. Children's development improves and the attainment gap narrows;
2. Parents' opportunities to take up work, training, or study increase; and
3. Family wellbeing improves through enhanced nurture and support.

The Scottish Government will evaluate the outcomes of the policy in the coming years. To understand how our evaluation will differ, and in places align, to the national evaluation, it is worth recapping on how the 600 hrs policy was evaluated.

## What do we know so far?

The 2014 entitlement increase to 600 hrs has been evaluated on a national level. The evaluation, completed in 2017, focused on three key areas. These areas and a few key highlights are presented below:

1. building capacity for the increased ELC entitlement;
  - a. the number of funded ELC hours used had increased by 30%
  - b. the number of funded ELC capacity spaces had increased by 4%
  - c. variation in changes to capacity was seen on a local authority level (23 increased, 9 decreased)
  - d. the workforce increased by 6% to deliver the entitlement
2. providing high-quality, accessible, affordable and flexible ELC;

- a. Quality – 92% of ELC providers graded good or better on all care inspectorate quality themes (-1%)
  - b. Accessibility – 85% of parents within 15 mins of ELC provider (13% 15-29 mins – 3% 30 mins +)
  - c. Flexibility - Increases in % of ELC providers who operate outside of school hours (19-30 +11%), and during school holidays (18-23 +5%)
  - d. Affordability – 69% of parents said they had some (52%) or significant (17%) affordability difficulties paying for ELC in the previous 12 months
3. and encouraging use of the entitlement by parents.
- a. 99% of 3- and 4-year-olds and 10% of 2-year-olds (approx. 25% eligible) registered
  - b. Average parent used childcare as follows:
  - c. 29 hrs per week (14 hrs funded, 7 paid, 8 informal)
  - d. 600 hrs policy had led to, on average, 1.5hrs extra childcare per week in main ELC provider

## Gaps and West Partnership context

The 600 hrs evaluation did not explore the three outcome aspirations of the policy (children’s outcomes, parental opportunities, and family wellbeing) as these were claimed to be long-term ambitions which could not be appropriately evaluated prior to the implementation of the 1140 hrs policy. Following the 600 hrs evaluation the Scottish Government completed three phases of baseline data collection prior to the implementation of the 1140 hrs policy. This involved collecting data on children’s development, health, and home environment, as well as the parent’s economic activity, health, and wellbeing. Some of this national level baseline data can be used as baseline data for West Partnership specific evaluation work.

To some extent, this evaluation will align to the ideas of the national level evaluation, whilst other elements present a different approach. Following consultation with the West Partnership Early Years Network, this evaluation will focus on two primary areas:

1. Outcomes for children (development and attainment)
2. Experiences of stakeholders (practitioners, parents, children, and wider/consequent stakeholders such as primary practitioners)

Wider system change themes will be explored as a secondary area and will be captured as part of theme 2.

Consultation with the West Partnership Early Years Network found that the following areas would not be included in this scope of the research:

- How the policy had impacted on parents’ ability to work, train or study (SG’s second outcome)
- Practicalities of the policy regarding practitioner numbers, hours of delivery, budgeting etc.

## Research Questions

The two overarching research questions of this evaluation are as follows:

1. What impact has the implementation of 1140 hours had on the development and attainment of our children?
2. What are the experiences and views of stakeholders in relation to the extension of ELC entitlement and the impact that this has had on the development and attainment of our children?

Wider themes to be explored in these overarching research questions include:

- Key milestones achieved
- Development in literacy and numeracy skills
- Social and emotional wellbeing
- Family learning and parental engagement
- Transition
- Curriculum development and pedagogy
- Workforce development

To answer these questions a variety of quantitative and qualitative methods will be implemented. These are detailed in the following section on methodology

## Methodology

### Children's Development and Attainment

Of particular interest to this work is the impact of extending ELC entitlement on children's development and latterly their attainment. This aligns to the primary aim of the policy at a national level; to improve outcomes for children and reduce the poverty-related attainment gap.

### Proposed Method(s)

#### Children's Development

To assess the impact of 1140hrs on children's development, this evaluation could use two tools that were used in the national baseline collection: the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) and the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ). The ASQ is a parent-completed questionnaire which is used globally to screen children's development. The SDQ is a parent or teacher completed questionnaire which is used widely to screen children's behaviour.

There are two ways in which these tools could be utilised to demonstrate the impact of extending the entitlement of ELC:

1. The tools could be used to collect data on 'eligible 2's' and 'comparator 3's' in the same way as the national baselining. The scores following the implantation of 1140 hours could then be compared to the baselined figures. The comparison could be against the

national weighted figures published in the Scottish Government Phase 3 report. Alternatively, we could request the baselined figures for the 8 West Partnership local authorities and use that as a RIC specific baseline figure from which a comparison can be made.

2. The tools could be used in another way to assess the impact of how long the enhanced entitlement had been received. This would involve capturing data on those who were previously 'eligible 2s' who received 600 hours entitlement prior to the implementation of 1140 and who turned 4 within the first year of the enhanced implementation (before Aug 22). These 4-year-olds would then be compared to those who followed in subsequent years, with the difference being the volume of time for which they had received 1140 hrs. The table below maps how this might look:

Date of Birth	Date entering ELC	Date turning 4	Number of months with 1140 hours entitlement when turning 4
Feb 1 <sup>st</sup> 2018	March/April 2020	Feb 1 <sup>st</sup> 2022	6
Feb 1 <sup>st</sup> 2019	March/April 2021	Feb 1 <sup>st</sup> 2023	16
Feb 1 <sup>st</sup> 2020	March/April 2022	Feb 1 <sup>st</sup> 2024	23
Feb 1 <sup>st</sup> 2021	March/April 2023	Feb 1 <sup>st</sup> 2025	23

If ASQ and SDQ scores were collected just after the 4<sup>th</sup> birthday of the eligible 2s then the impact of varying levels of exposure to the enhanced entitlement could be evaluated. Those who were born in 2018 would have had significantly less exposure to the 1140 hrs entitlement than those who were born in 2021. If the 1140 hrs entitlement has had an impact on children's development, then this would be expressed by an increased number of 4-year-olds being 'on schedule' (ASQ). A similar process could be completed with the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire.

## Considerations

There are a few considerations for both approaches detailed above. With regards to option 1, it is unclear as to whether the data collected by the Scottish Government for the national baselining would be sufficient for providing a representative picture of the West Partnership. It may be that the sample used there makes up part of a representative picture at a national level but would not be representative of our region. It is also unclear as to whether the Partnership would have access to this data.

With regards to option 2, a significant amount of work would be required to identify those previously 'eligible 2s' and to collect data from them when they turned 4. In 2020 there were 1816 2-year-olds who accessed funded ELC across the West Partnership. It might be useful to have sampling periods which could capture data on these children at different points depending on when they started.

Started ELC	When they will turn 4	Exposure to 1140 hours when turning 4



Jan 2020	Sept-Dec 2021	1-4 months
March/April 2020	Jan-Feb 2022	5-6 months
August 2020	March-August 2022	7-12 months
Jan 2021	Sept-Dec 2022	13-16 months
March/April 2021	Jan-Feb 2023	17-18 months
August 2021	March-August 2023	19-24 months

Therefore, samples would be collected on the following dates to gather data on those who have had varying levels of exposure to the enhanced entitlement:

Date of Data Collection	Exposure to 1140 policy
Feb 2022	6 months
Aug 2022	12 months
Feb 2023	18 months
Aug 2024	24 months

Assuming an entirely linear spread of when eligible 2-year-olds began their entitlement, there would be roughly 600 children that could be sampled at each collection point.

### Children's Attainment

To address the second part of the overarching research question, existing data collected on Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence (ACE) levels can be used to understand if there is a correlation between ELC entitlement and ACE's data. ACE's data presents a snapshot of how many P1 pupils are meeting the expected early level across four metrics: reading, writing, listening and talking, and numeracy. This data is collected annually but was missing from 2020 due to the pandemic. The Scottish Government published statistics presents numbers per each local authority and can also be split by SIMD Quintiles. As such, the data required for this element of the proposal has already been collected and will not require any data collection input from those involved in this project. The data would be analysed as part of this project and used to compare to previous cohorts.

As previously described, there would be a requirement to collect data over several years to reflect the growing exposure to the 1140 hours entitlement. The table below demonstrates how future cohorts will have had varying levels of exposure to the enhanced entitlement:

Date of P1 start	Usual Exposure to 1140 hrs	Date of ACEs publication
Aug 2022	12 months	Aug 2023
Aug 2023	24 months*	Aug 2024
Aug 2024	36 months**	Aug 2025

\*Example- A child born in March 2018 who entered ELC when they were 3 in Aug 2021 and enters primary school in Aug 2023 aged 5 years 5 months. If this child was eligible as a 2-year-old then they would start ELC in Aug 2020 and would have had 1 year of 600 hrs entitlement before 2 years of 1140.

\*\*Example – A child born in March 2019 who is eligible as a 2-year-old, started ELC in Aug 2021 and enters primary school in Aug 2024 aged 5 years and 5 months.

## Considerations

Currently the Scottish Government present ACEs data by local authorities and SIMD profiles. An accurate RIC level analysis would require access to raw data to aggregate SIMD profiles and attainment measures. Up until now, we have not had access to this level of detail when presenting ACEs figures. The ability to cut the data into SIMD quintiles would provide us with a way of exploring whether the enhanced childcare entitlement was having an impact on attainment gaps. It should be noted that attainment is an outcome that has multiple antecedents, which means that proving a causal link between entitlement and attainment is unlikely. Correlation analysis would be possible. This would be even stronger if we could link ELC usage data to attainment data in both pre and post 1140 implementation cohorts. For example, it would be of interest to note the differences at P1 between those 'eligible 2s' that took up the 600 hrs entitlement versus their comparator 3s compared to what happens after the implementation of the policy. Analysis of groups like this could overcome some of the deficits that SIMD analysis contains (where postcode and socio-economic status do not align).

## Stakeholder Experience

The experiences of various stakeholders are of particular interest to this evaluation. The Partnership is interested in getting multiple perspectives on the impact of the enhanced entitlement and its consequences on the development and outcomes of children. The West Partnership Early Years group noted that it was interested in exploring the experiences of ELC practitioners, parents, and their children, but also the wider and subsequent networks which overlap with ELC. This would involve those practitioners involved in transitions processes into P1. As a secondary focus, system change themes will be explored specifically with practitioners. A variety of methodological tools are suggested below to capture the experiences of these multiple groups.

## Proposed Method(s)

To capture the experiences of ELC practitioners, two methods are proposed:

1. A survey that would aim to capture data on practitioner experience of the move to 1140 hours. This would explore a range of areas including practitioner perceptions on the impact on children, their observations regarding how the nature of ELC has changed with the increased entitlement and their experience of delivering the increased entitlement. The survey would use both closed questions (used for quantitative analysis) and open questions which would allow for qualitative elaboration. The survey would be sent to all 717 ELC centres across the region with the aim of capturing as big a cross-section of the ELC environment as possible. We would encourage a range of ELC practitioners to complete the survey.
2. A series of group interviews could be conducted which would provide a means to gaining more in-depth qualitative data on the experience of ELC practitioner. This could be done in a few different ways. One option would be to select several ELC centres that would be used as samples that would aggregate to something that would be representative of the West Partnership region. An alternative method of organising these groups would be to complete

group interviews based on the type of ELC practitioner, rather than based on what centre they are employed in. This second option could provide insight as to the varying experience based on the type of practitioner within the group interview.

To capture the experience of practitioners who subsequently engage with those children who have received the extended entitlement, the following is proposed:

1. Individual or group interviews with P1 and transitions practitioner would then be able to collect more detailed qualitative data on any differences they had seen between cohorts with varying levels of exposure to the enhanced entitlement. This could be done over several years to explore differences that might arise from varying levels of exposure to the enhanced entitlement.

Date of P1 start	Usual Exposure to 1140 hrs
Aug 2022	12 months
Aug 2023	24 months
Aug 2024	36 months

To capture the experience of parents, two potential methods are proposed:

1. Surveys would be produced which would aim to explore the perceptions of parents regarding their child's development. Surveys could be given to different types of parents. For example, it could be given to those who have children who are aged 4 in 2022, who have therefore experienced both the 600 hrs and 1140 hrs entitlement. Parents of multiple children could also be targeted to capture the perceived differences in ELC provision between children.
2. Interviews with parents would be used to capture more in-depth data about their experience of the extended provision. As above, the sampling for this element of the project could target specific groups of parents. Those with multiple children who have experienced different levels of entitlement would be one option. There could also be a focus on those parents of 'eligible 2s' who have older children who had experienced a different level of entitlement.

To capture the voice of children a playful enquiry method is proposed:

1. Capturing data on young children is significantly different from collecting data on other groups. The ability for a young child to articulate their experiences is a particular challenge due to the developmental level of the child. As such, a playful method of collecting qualitative data is required. This might involve having a practitioner known to the child ask a few questions about their experience of ELC and could incorporate drawing, games, or other forms of play. The practitioner who conducted the playful enquiry would then be required to write up some short notes on the experience which could include quotes from the child or anything creative they had created in the process.

## Considerations

There are various considerations for the methods detailed above. These relate to sampling, ethics and data analysis.

### *Sampling*

Significant consideration needs to be given to the sampling of practitioner, parents, children, and primary practitioner across each of the proposed methods detailed above. Ideally, sampling would aim to be representative of the West Partnership region. Some of the methods above suggest highly specific groups, such as parents of 'eligible 2s' who have older children who have experienced different levels of entitlement. The ability to identify and recruit groups as specific as this may be difficult.

### *Ethics*

In each of the methods detailed above, it is important that those involved in the research are aware of the purpose of the research and consent to answering surveys or participating in interviews. All participants need to be aware that they can opt out of participation and that if they partake then they can request the deletion of any data associated with them.

The ethics of conducting research with young children are again significantly different from research on other groups. Parental consent will be required in all cases and parents will need to receive enough information regarding the purpose of the recording of data and how it will be stored etc to make an informed choice.

## Resources

To support and take forward this research, a full-time research assistant will be required. Key tasks will include sampling, survey and focus group design, data collection and analysis, report writing. The research assistant will be supported by the Evaluating and Reporting Lead Officer and Data and Evaluation Officer for the West Partnership. It is recommended that a post is recruited via standard local authority recruitment processes or a studentship is explored with an academic partner.

It is also recommended that an advisory group is established to advise on the direction of this work with regular updates being presented to the Early Years Network and West Partnership Governance Board.

## Recommendations

- The Early Years Network are advised to review and discuss this proposal with an agreed draft being presented to the governance board on 4<sup>th</sup> February;
- Establish an advisory group following board approval;
- Recruit a full-time research assistant to support with the implementation of the research

## West Partnership 1140 Hours Evaluation Advisory Group Remit

### Background

The West Partnership Early Years Network identified a need in relation to understanding the impact of the additional 1140 hours in early years on the outcomes of children. An evaluation proposal was developed in collaboration with the network and shared with the West Partnership board of Directors in February. The proposal was approved as well as a recommendation to establish an advisory group.

### Purpose of the advisory group

The purpose of the advisory group is to provide the West Partnership and research team with advice, expertise, support and challenge in all aspects of the evaluation.

### Remit of the advisory group

The advisory group will serve as a coordinated advice network and:

- Provide feedback on evaluation strategies and activities
- Offer critical thinking and current knowledge in the field of early years education
- Offer recommendations
- Offer views and opinions specifically in relation to the recruitment and engagement of research participants for example parents and infants
- Support the progress of the project and alleviate barriers where appropriate

### Membership

It is anticipated that the eight local authorities will be represented through various types of members. The advisory group will include:

- Senior officers in early years with a strategic remit
- Early years practitioners
- West Partnership research and evaluation team
- Senior Partnership Officer
- Chair of Early Years Network
- External research and evaluation colleagues particularly with an interest in early years research
- Parents

Once the membership is finalised, an appropriate chair will be selected and a term of reference created.

### Frequency of meetings

In the first instance, the board will meet on an 8-week cycle as the evaluation is in the early stages and reviewed thereafter. The first meeting is anticipated to be held **w/c 18<sup>th</sup> April**.

## Decision making

Any significant changes or recommendations suggested by the advisory group will be agreed by the West Partnership Governance Board.

## Reporting

The research team will provide updates to the advisory group however will not report to the advisory group. The research team will report to the governance board via the established reporting and evaluating processes.