

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCILEDUCATION COMMITTEE20 April 2023Report by Director of EducationEARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE ANNUAL REPORT**PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1. The purpose of the report is to update Education Committee on the approaches taken to develop Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) services. The report outlines the steps taken to improve further the quality, flexibility, accessibility and affordability of provision and experiences for young children.

RECOMMENDATION

2. Education Committee is asked to note the continued progress of the delivery of 1140 hours ELC and comment on the contents as outlined in this paper.

BACKGROUND

3. The Scottish Government set a transformational agenda to almost double the entitlement to free ELC from 600 hours to 1140 hours per year by 2020 for all 3 and 4 year olds and eligible 2 year olds, with underpinning key principles of quality, flexibility, accessibility and affordability.

4. In March 2020 the Scottish Government delayed the statutory duty on education authorities to make 1140 hours of early learning and childcare (ELC) available to each eligible child from August 2020 as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

5. In June 2020, Education Committee approved the department's proposal to continue to progress with plans to deliver 1140 hours of early learning and childcare for all eligible 2, 3 and 4 year old children from August 2020 albeit in a more limited way given the impact of Covid-19 on plans.

6. In December 2020 the Scottish Government confirmed its commitment to every eligible 2, 3 and 4 year old child receiving 1140 hours of free early learning and childcare, with a new implementation date of August 2021.

7. In East Renfrewshire, all families applying for 1140 hours of funded ELC for eligible children have been able to access this since August 2020. Full implementation, which includes the provision of food at lunchtime, has been ongoing since August 2021.

REPORT

Quality

8. Quality is at the heart of the delivery of funded Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) entitlement. ELC settings are subject to scrutiny by two separate inspection bodies. The Care Inspectorate re-introduced routine inspection activity following the Covid-19 pandemic in August 2021. This session 2 local authority settings and 2 Funded Providers have been inspected by the Care Inspectorate to date.

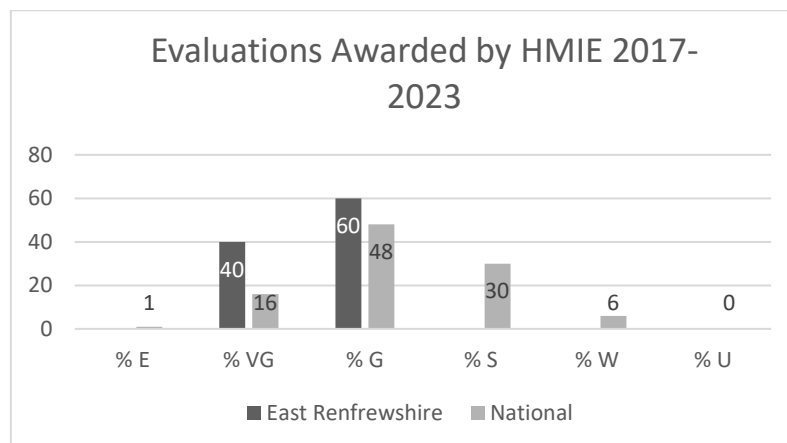
9. Education Scotland (HMIE) recommenced their inspection regime in August 2022 and have visited 4 local authority settings. The reports have been published and shared with Education Committee separately for; Madras Family Centre, Crookfur Family Centre and Hazeldene Family Centre. The report for Braidbar Nursery Class is not yet published. The high quality of ELC provision in each setting was recognised by the inspection teams, Table 1 below indicates the grades awarded against each quality indicator inspected.

Table 1

Setting	Leadership of change	Learning, teaching and assessment	Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion	Securing children's progress
Madras Family Centre	Good	Good	Very Good	Good
Crookfur Family Centre	Not assessed	Very Good	Not assessed	Very Good
Hazeldene Family Centre	Good	Good	Very Good	Very Good

10. These evaluations compare favourably with the national picture in ELC inspections since 2017/18 as shown in Chart 1 below.

Chart 1



11. In order to deliver funded places ELC settings are required to meet the National Standard which includes achieving grades of good or better across the range of criteria reported on by the Care Inspectorate. In recognition of the challenges posed by the pandemic, the Scottish Government provided some flexibility for providers, through publication of Interim Guidance on Funding Follows the Child and the National Standard which remains in place for session 2022/23.

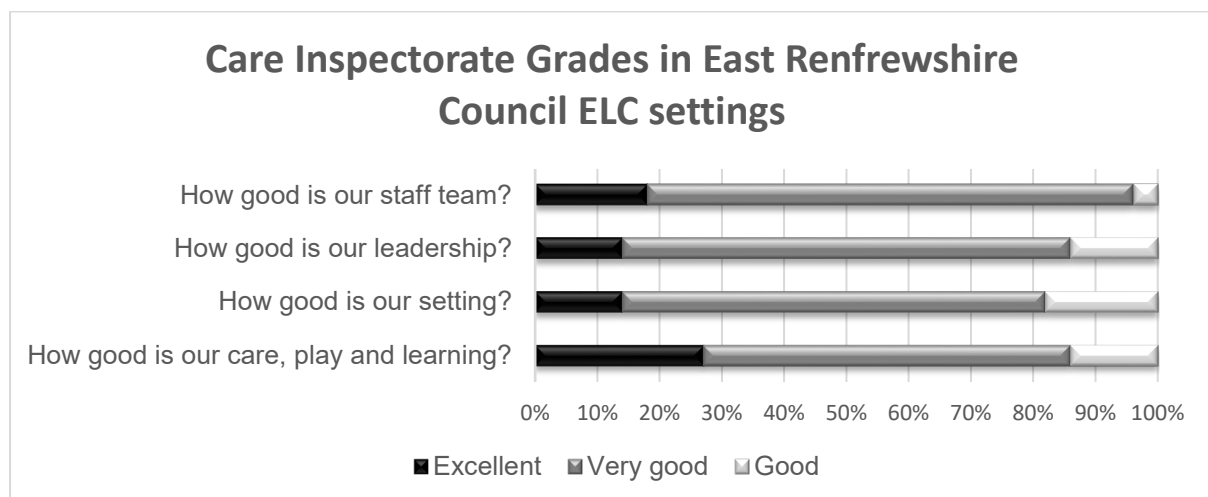
12. The Care Inspectorate published a new inspection framework in March 2022 and began to use it for inspections from 1 June 2022. The new Quality Framework for Daycare of Children, Childminding and School-aged Childcare introduced new key questions which have replaced, but are related to the previous terminology. Table 2 below shows the correlation between the previous criteria and the new key questions:

Table 2

Previous Quality Theme	Quality Framework Key Questions
Quality of Care and support	How good is our care, play and learning?
Quality of the environment	How good is our setting?
Quality of management and leadership	How good is our leadership?
Quality of staffing	How good is our staff team?

13. The quality of ELC in our local authority settings exceeds the National Standard with most settings (88%) achieving evaluations of very good or better across all key questions as shown in Chart 2 below. This compares favourably with data published by the Care Inspectorate which shows that nationally 60% of evaluations awarded up to 30 September 2022 were very good or better.

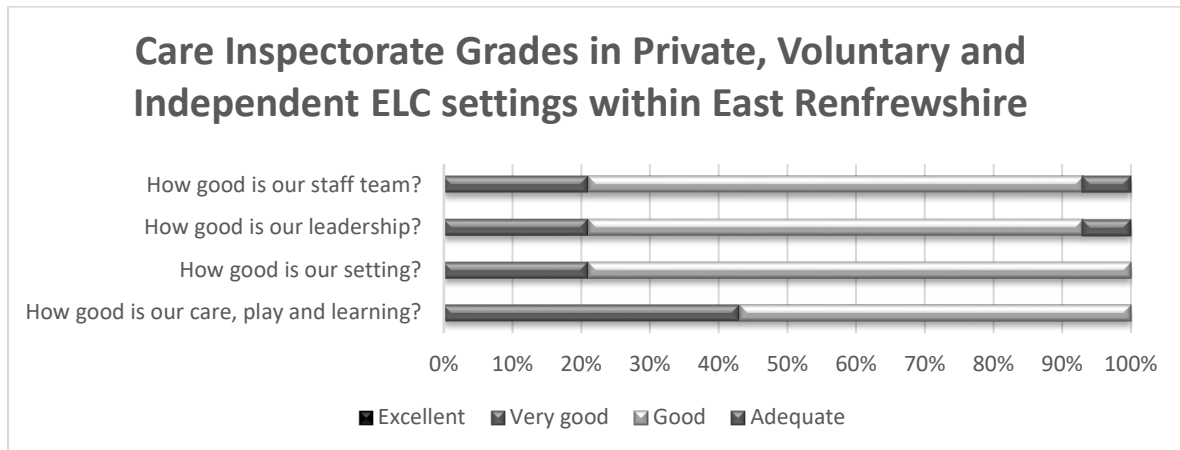
Chart 2



14. These grades reflect the 22 settings which have been inspected by the Care Inspectorate between 2017 and March 2023. Cross Arthurlie Nursery Class, one of our newest settings, received its first inspection in February 2023 and Overlee Family Centre, which opened in August 2020, has not yet been formally inspected.

15. Almost all Funded Providers delivering funded ELC in East Renfrewshire also meet and, in some cases, exceed the National Standard requirement to achieve grades of good or better, as illustrated in Chart 3 below.

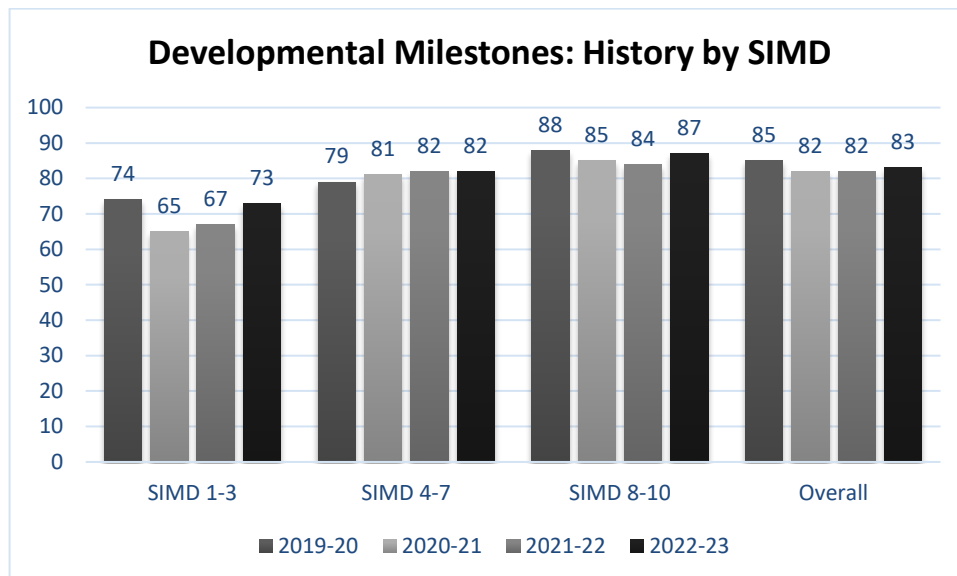
Chart 3



16. The Education Department, as guarantor of quality, closely monitors performance of funded providers, and where providers don't meet the National Standard, the department supports through a Service Improvement Period. The Care Inspectorate also offer an Improvement Programme, which is targeted via the Education Department as an additional level of support, however if evaluations from inspection do not improve, there is a risk to partnership status for the provider.

17. Since 2013-14 data has been gathered on the percentage of children achieving the expected levels of development on entry to primary 1. The following developmental components are assessed: Social, Emotional, Attention, Speech, Expressive Language, Receptive Language, Communication, Gross Motor Skills, Fine Motor Skills and Behaviour. This session 83% of children achieved their developmental milestones, this is an increase of 1% on the previous two years as shown in Chart 4 below.

Chart 4



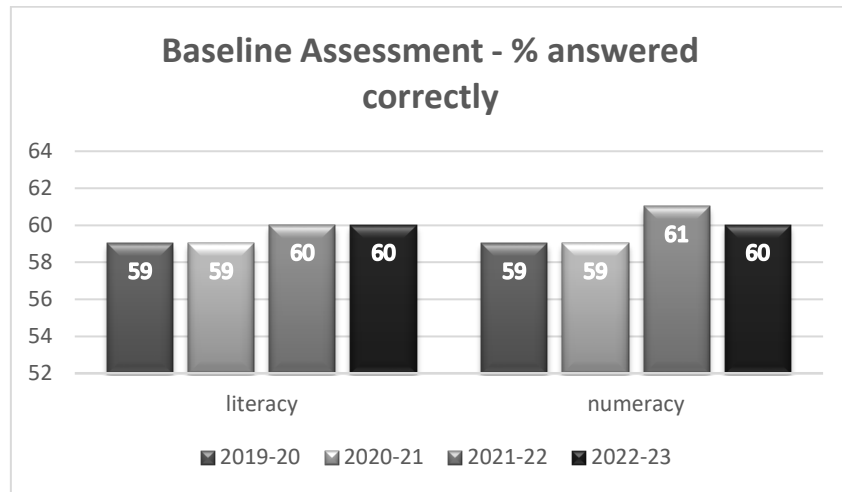
18. From 2016-17 to 2019-20, there had been a steady increase in the percentage of children achieving their developmental milestones within the least affluent communities, defined as communities residing in areas with a Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) deciles values between 1 and 3. From 2021-22 to 2022-23 the performance of children living

in the lowest deciles has increased by 6%, it has remained the same for deciles 4-7, and increased by 3% for those living in deciles 8-10.

19. Following the lockdown periods during 2020/2021 there had been a significant reversal in the previous reduction in the gap between the achievement of those from the most affluent, (SIMD 8-10), and least affluent, (SIMD 1-3) decile areas, with the gap reaching 20% in 2020-21, reducing to 17% in 2021/22 and reducing further to 14% in 2022/23. Although performance overall has not returned to pre-pandemic levels, the gap is now 14%, as it was in 2019/20, indicating recovery.

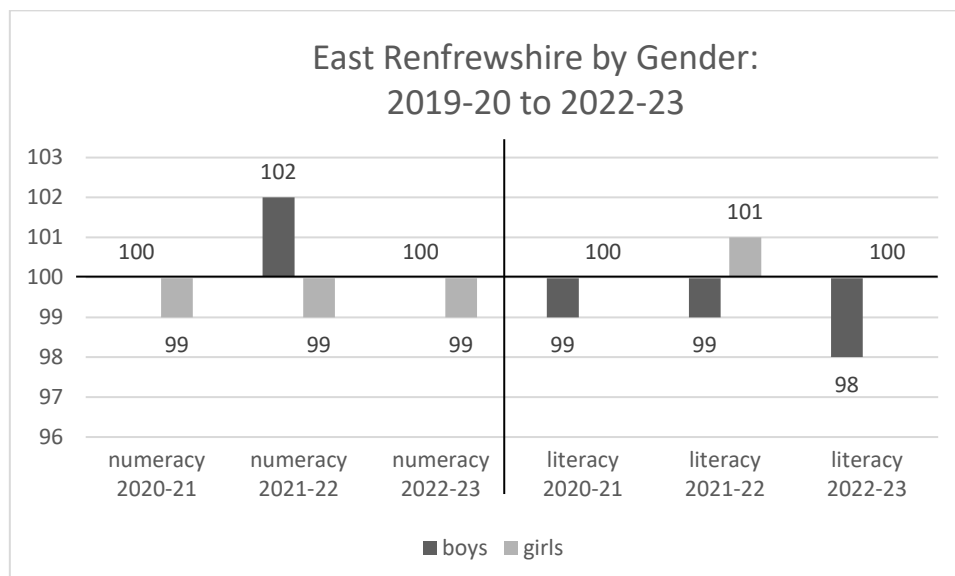
20. A Baseline Assessment has been in place since 2005-06 to assess children’s attainment in literacy and numeracy on entry to primary one. In contrast to the Developmental Milestones, overall performance in literacy and numeracy remains consistent with previous years, with a slight decrease in numeracy as shown in Chart 5.

Chart 5



21. The standardised scores for literacy and numeracy show a consistent pattern in terms of gender. Over the past three years boys have outperformed girls in numeracy and in literacy girls outperform boys as shown below in Chart 6.

Chart 6



22. The ERC internal Family Centred Approaches Accreditation Framework was introduced in 2014. This peer review model provides an opportunity for all ELC settings to measure how well they support parent and carer engagement and involvement in the life of their setting, which is now one of the criteria within the National Standard. Practitioners have enthusiastically welcomed parents back into their settings since the public health restrictions ended. This is reflected in the increase of ELC settings achieving Gold Family Focused status. A further 6 settings have successfully achieved Gold status bringing the total accredited to this level to 8 (35%), with a further 5 going forward for Gold by June 2023. At present, 42% of existing Funded Providers have achieved Silver Family Centred status and are being supported to progress through the framework. This will ensure that they continue to meet this element of the National Standard.

Quality of the Early Years Workforce

23. Quality of staff teams in East Renfrewshire ELC settings is a major strength, almost all (95%) have evaluations of very good or better from the Care Inspectorate for this theme compared to the national average of 55%. The Public, Voluntary and Independent sector has faced increasing challenges in staff recruitment and retention as a result of the ELC expansion to 1140 hours. This is reflected in Care Inspectorate's evaluations of our funded providers with 29% have grades of very good.

24. East Renfrewshire Council continues to invest in its current workforce to ensure that all our staff are highly skilled and motivated. This investment continues to take various forms including a focus on Career Long Professional Learning (CLPL) and professional inquiry.

25. Throughout 2022-23 ELC practitioners have continued to make effective use of the '0-6 Pedagogy' online hub which was introduced in 2017/18 as part of the ELC expansion plan. This online resource provides staff in schools, local authority and funded provider settings with a wide range of high-quality learning materials created by practitioners and senior leaders across East Renfrewshire. Usage data continues to show a high level of engagement with the materials with 4,182 views in the past year bringing the total number of views to 11,124.

26. Middle leaders in ELC settings continue to be supported through leadership forums. These are positively evaluated by the Depute Heads of Centre and Senior Child Development Officers who attend. The forum enables leaders to consider national developments in ELC, share practice and support each other with effective self-evaluation.

27. Funding continued for the peripatetic ELC teacher to support all children who attend a Funded Provider nursery in East Renfrewshire. The teacher works flexibly with each setting to support them in delivering aspects of learning and teaching in line with their improvement plans. She also provides effective support and challenge for individual children, ensuring they are able to access the curriculum and make positive progress in their learning and development.

28. The aspiration of a graduate workforce (100% qualified staff) in early years continues to make significant progress in East Renfrewshire. This year we were able to support a further 4 practitioners studying at degree level (SCQF level 9 or above) by funding the cost of some of their study modules.

29. Our staff continue to benefit from our involvement in the West Partnership (Glasgow City Region Education Improvement Collaborative). The West Partnership has formed a relationship with Edinburgh University, allowing us to access high quality professional learning linked to current research, policy and theory underpinned by the principles of Friedrich

Froebel, one of the earliest pioneers of early childhood education. A further 14 practitioners from our schools and nurseries benefitted from this opportunity in 2022- 23, bringing the total number of Froebelians currently working in East Renfrewshire to 58. The impact of this learning about Froebel's principles and practice was exemplified in the recent HMIE report for Crookfur Family Centre:

Practitioners make very good use of real-life experiences to develop further children's early skills across all areas of the curriculum. This includes sewing, woodland walks and baking along with every day routines including mealtimes. As a result, children demonstrate high levels of creativity and cooperate well with each other during group tasks.

30. Last session 4 practitioners took their learning further by engaging with the Froebelian Futures Professional Enquiry Programme. This session 5 practitioners in a range of schools and nurseries are developing their practice further by participating in the Froebelian Futures Leadership programme. Through this programme practitioners and leaders have increased opportunities to look outwards and connect with networks of ELC settings across Scotland. The professional inquiry and evaluation work undertaken enhances participant's knowledge of child development leading to improved experiences in nursery and primary classrooms for children.

Flexibility

31. The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 sets out a requirement for local authorities to consult with families on the provision of ELC every two years and set out a plan for delivery. With the previous consultation having been undertaken throughout October and November 2020, and reported to Education Committee in January 2021, a further consultation exercise on the provision of ELC within East Renfrewshire was undertaken from 10 – 30 October 2022, reporting to Education Committee in November 2022.

32. With cognisance to consultation responses, the following models were available for families to choose for session 2022-23:

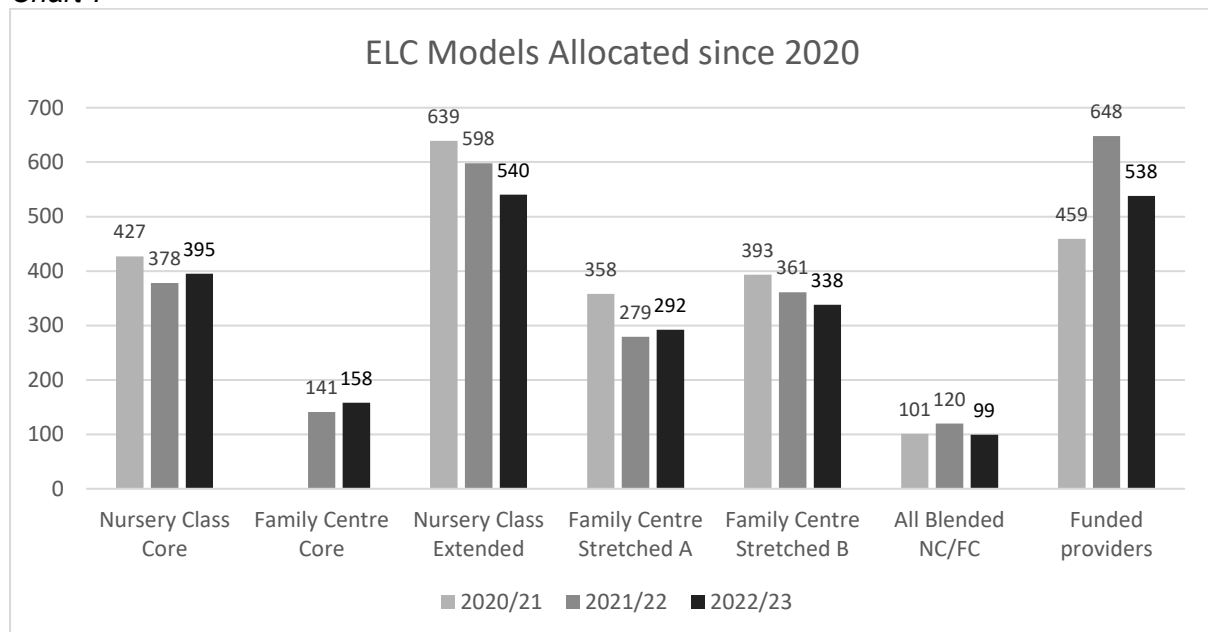
- | | | |
|------------------------------|---|---|
| a. Core Provision | - | 5 sessions of 6 hours per week
(school days over the school year) |
| b. Extended Day Provision | - | 3 sessions of 10 hours per week
(longer days over the school year) |
| c. Stretched Provision A | - | 5 sessions of 4 hours 45 minutes per week
(half days over a longer year) |
| d. Stretched Provision B | - | 2 sessions of 9 ½ hours and 1 session of 4
hours 45 minutes per week
(mix of full and half days over a longer year) |
| e. Blended Provision | - | entitlement split between 2 ELC providers |
| f. Funded Provider Provision | - | 30 hours per week (school year) fully funded
provision with a funded provider working in
partnership with ERC, including private, voluntary |

and independent (PVI) sector providers and childminders or 23 hours 45 minutes over 48 weeks

33. A total of 2360 children were provided with funded ELC in 2022/23.

34. Chart 7 shows how these places were allocated across each of the models available in each year. It should be noted that Core Provision hours were only made available in family centres from 2021-22.

Chart 7



35. The biggest reduction is evident in the models which provide full day delivery i.e. from 8am-6pm. Core placements which mirror the school day, from 9am-3pm continue to be a popular choice for parents.

36. All nursery places are allocated using the published priorities with a ballot being held where demand exceeds space available. In session 2022-23 the majority of parents indicated that the setting was more important to them than the model they were allocated. 94% of families applying for ELC were allocated their first choice of setting, rising from 91% in the previous year. 76% also received their first choice of model which is a 1% increase from 2021-22.

37. The Education Department is continually evaluating provision, ensuring that models offered continue to meet the choice and flexibility needs of the children and families in East Renfrewshire. To support with this moving forward, it is proposed to change Calderwood Lodge Nursery Class to a family centre, offering full year provision to families living to the west of Newton Mearns. At the moment, Calderwood Lodge Nursery Class offers a limited service out with standard term time, to accommodate the attendance patterns of children and families who celebrate the Jewish calendar, but not full year provision.

38. The nursery class is staffed with a Depute Head of Centre and some full year contracted staff to enable this flexibility. It is proposed that by converting the nursery class to

a family centre, a greater offer of flexibility would be available to families, enabling them to have full year provision, and the models of delivery that are currently offered in our family centres. The move to a family centre would also increase places in Newton Mearns to help fulfil the statutory deferral duty that comes into effect in August 2023.

39. From the beginning of the 2023/24, we will begin to transition towards a family centre approach, with a full implementation starting from August 2024. For children already attending Calderwood Lodge Nursery Class, they will be able to continue to attend on the existing basis as the nursery class transitions towards becoming a family centre. This will operate throughout the first year until such time as the existing children complete their time at nursery.

40. In response to the feedback provided through regular consultation with families, the option of 'add-on' hours was made available in several nurseries throughout East Renfrewshire from the beginning of the 2022/23 session. This followed on from a successful pilot in the Busby/Clarkston/Eaglesham community at the end of the 2021/22 session. The add-on scheme enables families to purchase additional hours to supplement their child's nursery allocation, providing greater flexibility.

41. In the initial year of the add-on scheme, 177 families chose to purchase additional hours above their child's entitlement. In addition to providing greater flexibility and choice to families, this has generated income of approximately £120,000 by utilising vacant sessions across different ELC settings.

42. As previously noted by Education Committee, the department will be further enhancing this offer for the 2023/24 session by introducing the option of full time hours for families wishing to access all week provision for their child.

43. The Early Years Intervention Group (EYIG) allows the department to respond and support children and families who need our help most, through the allocation of a range of services and resources. To date, in session 2022-23, 235 referrals have been made through the EYIG: this is a significant increase of 30% on the previous year. This highlights the increased demand for support for children facing challenges as a result of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on them and their families. 12% received additional free early learning and childcare hours over their entitled 1140 hours, 30% were allocated a nursery place prior to their entitlement, 14% were given support by the Preschool Assessment and Development Unit (PSADU), 11% were referred for further assessment / intervention with Educational Psychology Service, 5% were allocated to the Sensory Support Service, and 3% received support within their home or community, for example through the Family First team. 24% of referrals resulted in no resource allocation being made.

44. Starting and stopping dates for funded early learning and childcare depend on the date of the child's birthday, local school term dates and, where relevant, whether the parent has chosen to defer the child's start at primary school for a year.

45. The Provision of Early Learning and Childcare (Specified Children) Order 2014 sets out starting and stopping dates for eligibility to access funded ELC. Eligible 2 year olds and all 3 year olds are eligible for funded early learning and childcare from the beginning of the first term after the child's 2nd or 3rd birthday. Where a child's birthday falls on or between the following dates, the child will become eligible from the terms set out below:

- Child's birthday: 1 March – 31 August
Eligible from: August (autumn term) occurring in that year
- Child's birthday: 1 September – 31 December
Eligible from: January (spring term) following their birthday

- Child's birthday: 1 January – last day February
Eligible from: March/ April (summer term) following their birthday

46. Within East Renfrewshire, under the discretionary powers within section 1(1C) of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980, eligible children have been able to access funded ELC earlier than the statutory start dates, with children normally starting immediately following on from their 2nd or 3rd birthday. In March 2023 the Council took the decision to align children's entitlement to early learning and childcare within East Renfrewshire to the Scottish Government's national guidance. This will take effect from 1 August 2023.

47. In October 2019, the Scottish Government committed to legislate to ensure that all children who defer their primary 1 start are able to access funded ELC. Legislation has been laid in the Scottish Parliament which will mean, from August 2023, all children who defer will automatically be able to access funded ELC.

48. The school year starts in August, with any single school year group usually consisting of children born between the beginning of March in one year and the end of February the following year. Parents of children that are still 4 years old on the date they are eligible to start school (i.e. children with birth dates on or between the day after the school commencement date in August – last day in February) can defer their child's start at primary school for a year.

49. In terms of eligibility for funded early learning and childcare when children defer primary 1 for a year, an amendment has been made to the 2014 Order to ensure that from 1 August 2023, all children who defer are automatically entitled to funded early learning and childcare in their deferred year.

50. The Education Department has a system in place that enables parents to indicate at the time of primary one enrolment whether they wish to defer their child's school start date. This process enables the department to support with continuation of an ELC place. Where parents do not indicate at this time, and make a late decision, they may risk access to their existing ELC provision, however an alternative nursery place will be offered.

51. Applications for primary one places close at the end of January each year. As described above, parents were asked to indicate if they wished to defer their child's entry to school and access an additional funded year of ELC. 155 parents applied to defer their child for session 2023-24 through this process, an increase of 30 applications compared to 2022-23. 3 parents withdrew their application and the remaining 152 have been allocated an ELC place for next session.

52. The number of deferral applications for those children born between the start of term in August and the end of December increased from 40 in 2022-23 to 64 in session 2023-24 representing 41% of all requests. This reflects the change in legislation that entitles these children to funded ELC, rather than this being discretionary, as in the past. A further 4 applications were made for children to defer whose birthday is before the start of term in August, 3 of these have been granted, with the other being allocated suitable school age provision.

53. The department received 2 applications from parents wishing to apply for early entry to primary school. After assessment, these applications were declined.

ACCESSIBILITY

54. Digital applications for ELC went live online for session 2022-23 in December 2021. 929 applications were received within the application window and a further 728 were received throughout the year. It should be noted that the 728 applications included those from families seeking a change to their child's allocated provision. For session 2023-24, 938 applications were received within the application window, open from December 2022 until the end of January 2023. From late April 2023, offers will be made to families, with parents able to accept or decline their place online.

55. As noted previously, there is and continues to be pressure on ELC places in the Barrhead/Neilston community. At present the authority only has 2 funded providers within this ELC community (Railway Cottage Nursery and one childminder).

56. Therefore, to allow the Council to meet its duties under the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, it is proposed to increase provision in Barrhead through the development of a new nursery class in St John's Primary School. Final design work is being confirmed, however, it is proposed that the nursery will initially have a registered capacity of 60, increasing to 90 once established. Places will be available for 2, 3 and 4 year olds.

57. This proposal will enable the Council to meet demand for ELC places as a consequence of ongoing and further planned new residential developments and the legislative changes regarding deferred entry to school which come into effect in August 2023. This will ensure enhanced capacity within this community, delivering on the statutory entitlement in line with the principles of accessibility and flexibility.

58. The proposed timescale for opening the nursery class is January 2024. As such, all families in the Barrhead community will be invited to apply for a place in St John's Nursery Class in October 2023. This will allow applications to be considered prior to opening and limits displacement of children.

59. All eligible 2 year olds continue to be offered 1140 hours of ELC with the majority accessing the Stretched A and B family centre models which allow 2 children to take up one place. For this reason the Council has been able to meet the demand for places for eligible 2 year olds for the ninth consecutive year. 157 children have been allocated through the Local Admissions Panel or EYIG this session to date, an increase of 17% on the previous year.

60. In addition to providing Early Learning and Childcare for eligible and vulnerable 2 year olds, where there is capacity to do so we continue to support other working families who are not eligible, with the offer to purchase nursery places. Demand for this service increases year on year. This session a further 153 children and families with children aged 3 and benefitted from this service to date. This is a 50% increase on the previous year.

61. Table 3 below details the registered capacity for 2 year olds in each local authority nursery for session 2023-24. The delivery models determine how these places are used, with the actual number of children accommodated varying depending on specific models.

Table 3

Establishment	Staffing Capacity / Places
Arthurlie Family Centre (0 - 3 provision)	50
Cart Mill Family Centre (2 year old provision)	20
Glen Family Centre (0-3 provision)	50
Isobel Mair Family Centre (0-3 provision)*	15

Madras Family Centre (2 year old provision)	15
McCready Family Centre (0-3 provision)	47
St John's Nursery Class (2 year old provision)**	10

*Isobel Mair Family Centre provision is for children with Additional Support Needs, with flexibility of age range, therefore capacity for different ages may alter to meet needs.

**From January 2024

62. Detailed in Table 4 is the number of available places for 3 and 4 year olds in each local authority setting, as determined by the delivery models, from August 2023. To maximise efficiency, staff budgets for each setting are determined according to the number of children who are allocated a place. Where capacity allows additional spaces will be available for parents to purchase.

Table 4

Establishment	Available Places
Arthurlie Family Centre	200
Busby Nursery Class	72
Braidbar Nursery Class	72
Calderwood Lodge Nursery Class	106
Carlibar Nursery Class	109
Carolside Nursery Class	88
Cart Mill Family Centre	64
Crookfur Family Centre	144
Cross Arthurlie Nursery Class	76
Eaglesham Nursery Class	88
Giffnock Nursery Class	40
Glenwood Family Centre	168
Hazeldene Family Centre	120
Isobel Mair Family Centre*	24
Madras Family Centre	136
Maidenhill Nursery Class	144
Mearns Nursery Class	72
Netherlee Nursery Class	88
Overlee Family Centre	64
St Cadoc's Nursery Class	72
St John's Nursery Class**	50
Thornliebank	42
Total	2039

*Within Isobel Mair Family Centre there is provision for children with Additional Support Needs, with flexibility of age range, therefore capacity for different ages may alter to meet needs.

**From January 2024

63. As referenced in paragraph 16 of this report, partnership status is determined by quality and meeting the National Standard. For the period, 2023 - 2026 East Renfrewshire will work with 13 providers, one less than previously. These settings were successful in providing sufficient evidence to enter into a new agreement to continue to provide funded ELC, however 2 settings are being supported through a Service Improvement Period to ensure the quality of their provision. New providers, or previous partners who meet the National Standard during this 3 year period, can apply for partnership status at any time. Table 5 below, details the current partners.

Table 5

Provider	Status
Belmont Nursery Class	Independent
Broom Nursery	Voluntary
Clarkston Nursery	Voluntary
Elmwood Nursery	Private
Greenbank Woodland Play	Private
Happy Days Too (Busby)	Private
Happy Days Too (SF)	Private
Innocence Nursery	Private
Kirkhillgait Nursery	Private
Kirktonholme	Private
Orchardpark Nursery (Thornliebank)	Private
Orchardpark Nursery (Newton Mearns)	Private
Railway Cottage	Private

64. In addition to the nurseries listed above, 13 childminders also work in partnership to deliver funded early learning and childcare. At present 10 of these childminders are providing funded placements for children.

FINANCIAL AND EFFICIENCY IMPLICATIONS

65. Elected members will note the continued uncertainty around funding for ELC as we await confirmation of the total allocation for the years ahead. Engagement with both COSLA and the Scottish Government continues to ensure that the Council receives a funding settlement that meets the true costs of delivering the additional entitlement to children across East Renfrewshire.

66. In reviewing the provision for 2023-24, the department adopted more efficient models within each establishment. Whilst it is anticipated that the number of children accessing funded ELC will rise in 2023-24 due to the changes to the entitlement for those seeking to defer, the proposed changes to Calderwood Lodge, and the new nursery class at St John's, the department will look to minimise any significant increases to staffing levels. Existing staffing allocations will continue to be reviewed to ensure the most efficient deployment, whilst ensuring continued regulatory compliance, and minimise the need for significant additional recruitment.

67. There are no foreseen implications which would lead to a change in contractual duties of staff working in local authority nurseries. However, discussions will be arranged with relevant trade union representatives to ensure this is the case and any matters arising from such will be considered in partnership as appropriate.

68. The increase of full time provision availability within ELC settings will result in additional income for the Council. This will contribute towards the existing challenging income target already set out within the department's budget.

69. The provision of a free hot lunch was forecast to cost £3.00 per child, per day, however with inflationary rises and the demands of the nutritional guidelines, this cost is likely to increase. All local authority settings are registered with the Scottish Milk and Healthy Snack Scheme which provides free milk and snack for children attending nursery, 87% of funded providers delivering funded ELC are benefitting from this scheme.

70. Local authorities commission ELC places from funded providers. At present ERC commissions at a rate of £5.69 per hour for eligible children, as approved by Education Committee in late 2022. As noted in the previous committee report, the Education Department is committed to reviewing this rate on an annual basis in line with the Scottish Government's financial sustainability health check and further reports will be brought to committee in due course.

71. The capital required to fund the new provision proposed in this paper is included in the Council's capital plan and initial revenue costs have been approved as part of the department's budget for 2023/24

CONCLUSION

72. The offer of 1140 hours has been successfully introduced in East Renfrewshire, with evidence gathered highlighting continuous improvement in terms of quality, flexibility, accessibility and affordability.

73. The increase in entitlement of early learning and childcare is a mitigating factor on the impact of Covid-19 and reducing the poverty related attainment gap, with performance showing evidence of recovery and a return to pre-pandemic levels.

74. There is a strong commitment and capacity for continuous improvement.

RECOMMENDATION

75. Education Committee is asked to note the continued progress of the delivery of 1140 hours ELC and comment on the contents as outlined in this paper.

Mark Ratter
Director of Education
April 2023

Convener Contact Details

Councillor Anderson, Convener for Education, Equalities, Culture and Leisure
Tel: 07341 640 825
Tel: 0141 577 3107
andrew.anderson@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk

Report Authors

Rosamund Rodriguez
Tel: 0141 577 3222
Rosamund.Rodriguez2@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk

Janice Collins
Tel: 0141 577 3204
Janice.Collins@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk