



**REPORT TO: EDUCATION, CHILDREN'S AND LEISURE SERVICES
COMMITTEE ON 2 NOVEMBER 2022**

**SUBJECT: EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE – CAPACITY AND
DEMAND FOR FUNDED CHILDCARE PLACES UPDATE**

**BY: DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE (EDUCATION, COMMUNITIES AND
ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT)**

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To inform the Committee of how the demand is being met to provide Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) funded places in Moray
- 1.2 To inform the Committee of the registration process for funded ELC places, the current demand for ELC places within Moray including projected population by each Associated School Group (ASG) area and the capacity for funded ELC places within Moray.
- 1.3 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III (D) (1) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to all the functions of the Council as an Education Authority.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that Committee:-

- (i) **scrutinise and note how demand is met to provide ELC funded places in Moray; and**
- (ii) **note the registration process for funded ELC places, the current demand for ELC places within each ASG area and the capacity for funded ELC places within Moray.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 At the meeting of Education, Children's and Leisure Services Committee on 24 August 2022, Councillor Warren noted the information report on Early Learning and Childcare – Capacity and Demand for Funded Childcare Places and asked that it be brought to the next meeting of the Committee to consider the impact of placements on travel costs for families.

- 3.2 Local authorities in Scotland have a statutory legislative duty to provide 1140 hours of funded early learning and childcare to all 3-4 year olds and eligible 2 year old children.
- 3.3 This is delivered by a combination of local authority nurseries, independent (private and third sector) ELC partner provider nurseries and partner provider childminders. Moray currently has 24 local authority nurseries, 39 partner provider nurseries and 37 partner provider childminders.
- 3.4 Attendance at early learning and childcare is not statutory, and it is for parents to decide whether they want their child to participate.
- 3.5 Children's eligibility for funded childcare is determined by date of birth as per the below chart:

Session 2022/2023

A child whose date of birth is between:	Will be eligible for a funded place from:	Type of place:
16 August 2017 and 28 February 2018	16 August 2022	Deferred Entry
1 March 2018 and 28 February 2019	16 August 2022	Pre-school
1 March 2019 and 31 August 2019	16 August 2022	Ante pre-school
1 September 2019 and 31 December 2019	9 January 2023	Ante pre-school
1 January 2020 and 29 February 2020	17 April 2023	Ante pre-school

- 3.6 Eligibility for 2 year old funded childcare is dependent on criteria relating to parents/carers receiving qualifying benefits such as income support, income-based job seekers allowance etc. This also includes children that are looked after, under a kinship care order or under a guardianship order. Once the child becomes eligible and takes up their place, they stay entitled to a place even if their parent's circumstances change (for example, if they no longer receive one of the qualifying benefits); however, parents must re-apply for their child's place as a 3 year old.
- 3.7 Registration for a 2 year old placement requires parents/carers to complete a registration form available to download from Moray Council's website or by contacting the ELC administration team to receive a hard copy of the form by post. Eligibility is then confirmed by the ELC administration team. It is the responsibility of the parent to contact the provider they wish to use once their eligibility has been confirmed.
- 3.8 Parents of 3-4 year old children are able to register during a two week period via an online application process in January for the following academic year that begins in August. For those families unable to utilise online registration, they are able to contact the ELC administration team by email or phone to receive a hard copy of the registration form or alternatively, they can request a hard copy from their nursery of choice.

3.9 Parents may choose to defer entry to primary school and elect to have their child attend nursery for one additional year if their child's 5th birthday falls between start of term in August and the end of February of the following year.

3.10 Parents of funded 3 and 4 year olds are asked to select up to three ELC provider settings in order of preference with the option to have their funded entitlement split between 2 providers. Where possible parents are awarded a place at their first choice, but as there are a limited number of places in each setting this is not always achievable. This is particularly the case for those children that do not start their funded place until January or April due to their date of birth.

3.11 Funded childcare places are allocated with priority given as follows:

- Child with existing attendance in the nursery
- Child resident in secondary catchment area and sibling in the nursery
- Child resident in secondary catchment
- Child with [Co-ordinated Support Plan \(CSP\)](#), and/or assessment by the Education Authority
- Child outwith secondary catchment area and sibling in the nursery
- Child outwith the secondary catchment area

Priority within any of the six categories above, where it is necessary to be determined, will be given to older children first and then to those resident closest to the setting (distance being calculated by the straight line method).

3.12 All registration records for nursery children are maintained on the operating system known as the Nursery Application Management System (NAMS) which allows projected figures to be extracted in advance of each scheduled intake period in August, January and April.

3.13 The current forecasted figures extracted from NAMS indicate that demand for ELC funded places for August 2022 will be accommodated within each ASG area. Further details are noted within **Appendix 1**.

3.14 The NAMS figures for August 2022 do not include uplifts for January and April intakes of children in the 2-3 age group that will turn 3 and become eligible for funded childcare throughout the year. As a comparison, in August 2021 the projected nursery enrolment was 1,314 children between ages 3-5 which then increased to 1,848 children by April 2022. This takes account of families accessing any level of funded hours.

3.15 Nursery age population figures based on CHI data from 2021, project that the population for this age group will continue to be similar each subsequent year from 2022-2024. This indicates that we will be able to continue meeting the demand for ELC funded places in the immediate future. Additional information is broken down within **Appendix 1** by each ASG area.

- 3.16 It is important to note that the projected population figures only provide the potential number of children that are eligible for funded early learning and childcare and do not reflect how many parents/carers will choose to take up their entitlement of 1140 hours or any part thereof.

4. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a) Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP))

The report links to the priority of working towards a financially stable Council that provides valued services to our Communities and providing a sustainable education service aiming for excellence as referred to in the Moray Council Corporate Plan.

The report links to 'Building a better future for our children and young people in Moray' from the LOIP.

(b) Policy and Legal

The Care Inspectorate inspects all registered services regulated under the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010, which includes nursery classes and playgroups.

Local authorities have a statutory legislative requirement to provide 1140 hours of funded early learning and childcare hours to all 3-4 year olds and eligible 2 year old children.

(c) Financial implications

As providing 1140 hours of funded early learning and childcare is a statutory legislative requirement, there will ongoing financial implications for Moray Council in regards to ensuring all eligible children and families have access to this service.

There are no further financial implications arising directly from this report.

(d) Risk Implications

There are no risk implications arising directly from this report.

(e) Staffing Implications

There are no staff implications arising directly from this report.

(f) Property

There are no property implications arising directly from this report.

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

There is no requirement for an equality impact or socio economic impact assessment to be carried out.

(h) Climate Change and Biodiversity Impacts

There are no climate change or biodiversity impacts arising directly from this report.

(i) Consultations

Depute Chief Executive, Head of Education (Chief Education Officer), Early Years Service Manager, Susan Walker, Business Support Administrator and Tracey Sutherland, Committee Services Officer have been consulted.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 Committee is asked to note and scrutinise how demand is met to provide ELC funded places in Moray.

5.2 Committee is asked to note the registration process for funded early learning and childcare hours.

5.3 Committee is asked to note the current demand for ELC places within Moray and projected population by each ASG area.

5.4 Committee is asked to note the capacity for funded ELC places within Moray.

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Background Papers:	N/A
Ref:	SPMAN-1315769894-335/SPMAN-1315769894-333