

ANGUS COUNCIL

FAMILY, EDUCATION AND JUSTICE COMMITTEE- 30 MAY 2024

CHARGING FOR ADDITIONAL HOURS OF EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE

REPORT BY KELLY MCINTOSH, DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING

1. ABSTRACT

This report seeks approval to trial the opportunity for parents and carers to pay for an additional session of Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) to create further flexibility in Local Authority settings.

2. ALIGNMENT TO THE COUNCIL PLAN AND COUNCIL POLICIES

The proposals in this report align to:

Council Plan 2023-28

- Support children, young people and adults to access appropriate opportunities which allow them to progress in their learning.
- Deliver our statutory obligation and core functions, tailored to suit our available resources and making best use of our data and performance information.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- (i) Approve the proposal to provide further flexibility in the provision of Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) in Local Authority settings by trialling the option for parents and carers to pay for one additional session of ELC provision per week;
- (ii) Approve the proposal to charge parents and carers £30 for one five-hour session of ELC; and
- (iii) Agree that a report on the outcome of the trial will be shared with the Family, Education and Justice Committee in May 2025 at which time the continuation or any further roll out of this provision can be considered.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The legislative basis for providing funded early learning and childcare is found in two pieces of primary legislation: [The Education \(Scotland\) Act 1980](#) and [The Children and Young People \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#).
- 4.2 Reference is made to the Scottish Government's [Blueprint for 2020: Expansion of ELC in Scotland consultation](#) which highlights the Local Authority's need to respond to the needs of children and families through providing flexible options.
- 4.3 Reference is made to report number [72/16](#) which sets out previous arrangements in place to charge payment for additional hours beyond the, then core, 600 hours where there was no other provision of this kind offered to parents and carers from partner providers.

5. CURRENT POSITION

- 5.1 Angus offers 1140 hours of funded Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) to children aged three to five years and eligible two-year-olds. This can be accessed in two stand-alone ELC settings, nursery classes in schools and in partner private, voluntary and childminder providers who are in contract with the council.

- 5.2 Parents and carers who wish to purchase additional hours of ELC in Local Authority settings cannot currently do this. They can only purchase additional hours in private and voluntary settings and with childminders.
- 5.3 Neighbouring Tayside Local Authorities offer additional hours within some of their local authority settings to provide additional flexibility for parents and carers.
- 5.4 A survey to service users in November 2023, to evaluate whether the ELC provision in Angus is meeting the ongoing needs of families in line with the Scottish Government's [Blueprint for 2020: Expansion of ELC in Scotland consultation](#), highlighted an increased demand for flexibility within local authority ELCs. Of the 327 parents and carers who responded to the survey, 58% stated that they would be interested in the option to pay for additional hours in the local authority ELC that their child attends. The survey data indicated this would provide continuity of care and additional flexibility for working parents and carers.
- 5.5 As highlighted in Report [72/16](#), consideration of this provision must be balanced with possible increased staffing costs to provide a high-quality service to more children for longer. Responses from parents with children attending our stand-alone settings showed that 88% of parents and carers in Carnoustie ELC and 33% of parents and carers in Forfar ELC would like to purchase additional sessions. Both settings currently provide for three to five-year-olds and eligible two-year-olds, in five-hour sessions for 228 days per year and have the staffing models in place and space to facilitate additional sessions for children. A trial at these two settings would incur no additional costs to the council as admission will be limited to additional available places within the allocated staff to child ratios per session.
- 5.6 To minimise the impact on partner contracted providers, the trial would be limited to the offer of one session, per child, per week. This would ensure the continuity of care for children who currently use family members or friends for childcare, without creating competition with private and voluntary providers.
- 5.7 The proposed session rate of £30 for one-five-hour session of ELC has been calculated in line with local market rates at this time. The proposed session rates are also in keeping with the sustainable rates currently paid to partner contracted providers once their profit element is removed.

6. PROPOSALS

- 6.1 In light of the increased parental demand for payment for additional provision of Early Learning and Childcare (ELC), through the introduction of 1140 hours of delivery, it is proposed that the Family, Education and Justice Committee approves the trial offer of one additional session per child, per week at Forfar or Carnoustie ELC.
- 6.2 If the above is approved, it is proposed that the Family, Education and Justice Committee agrees for the charge of £30 for one five-hour session of ELC.
- 6.3 If the trial is approved, a report on the outcome of the trial will be shared with the Family, Education and Justice Committee in May 2025 at which time the continuation or any further roll out of this provision can be considered.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There is a potential of a small financial benefit to the council if parents and carers purchase an additional session. e.g., if five parents chose to purchase one additional session per week, this would generate an income of £150 per week and a maximum of £6750 over the course of a year.
- 7.2 There is also an efficiency saving as the council would be delivering more with existing staffing levels. There would be no additional staff costs arising from this proposal.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

8.1 This report contributes towards CORRR0002 – Transforming for the Future.

9. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no direct environmental implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

10. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT, HUMAN RIGHTS AND FAIRER SCOTLAND DUTY

10.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out and is attached.

11. CONSULTATION

11.1 The Director of Finance and the Director of Legal, Governance and Change have been consulted in the preparation of this report. In addition, the recommendations have been brought forward in response to previous consultation with parents and carers regarding ELC services.

NOTE: The background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) which were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above report are:

Report [72/16](#)

[Blueprint for 2020: Expansion of ELC in Scotland consultation](#)

[The Children and Young People \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#)

[The Education \(Scotland\) Act 1980](#)

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List of Appendices:

Equality Impact Assessment