

Early Learning and Childcare: update no. 23 – June 2022

Introduction from Alison Cumming, Director for Early Learning and Childcare

Hello and welcome to our June update.

We hope that you have enjoyed some brighter, warmer days this spring - even though they have been few and far between at times!

Since our last update in March, when I updated you on our Omicron impacts fund, we've moved into a much more positive position in relation to the pandemic. This update provides a summary of some recent changes to our new, streamline COVID-19 safety guidance.

The updates provided below show that the last few months have been a busy and productive period for the Early Learning and Childcare Directorate. Of particular note, we share some encouraging news about the UK Government's consultation to facilitate data sharing to support uptake of the funded ELC offer among two year-olds. There are also important updates on quality and inspection, along with new guidance to support this year's targeted summer holiday offer. We highlight our plans for publishing two strategic documents later this year – one focusing on a strategic overview of all our policies, and the other focusing on workforce. There are also several important updates related to professional learning.

I hope you find the updates in this pre summer update helpful. This will be our last update in this format before we relaunch with a new look after the summer. If you have any feedback you would like to share on these updates, please let us know.

In the meantime I hope you have some time off to rest and recharge over the summer period, which I hope will be a much more normal one for all of us after the experience of the last two years.

Best wishes

Alison

[Previous editions of the ELC COVID-19 update.](#)

COVID-19 update

In March we published updated guidance for the ELC sector. We merged the existing three pieces of guidance (ELC, School aged childcare and childminders) into one, much shorter and simpler publication reflecting the wider approach to managing COVID-19 across society. This update has been well received by the sector and the guidance can be found here: [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): early learning and childcare services](#).

On 31 May we published a minor update to the guidance explaining that the Highest Risk List had ended. More information can be found here: [End of the Highest Risk List](#)

Contact: Colin Ferris at colin.ferris@gov.scot

Data Sharing to maximise uptake of ELC for eligible two-year olds

The UK government published their response to a recent consultation on draft Regulations on Tuesday 7 June. These Regulations would allow data sharing for the purposes of targeting information to households with an eligible two-year-old: [UK Government Response to Data Sharing Regulations Consultation](#).

The responses were overwhelmingly positive, and both the response and the associated statement indicate that the UK Government will move to lay the necessary Regulations as soon as Parliamentary time allows: Written statements - Written questions, answers and statements - UK Parliament.

Scottish Government continue to work with DWP and HMRC to ensure a suitable mechanism for sharing the data is in place as soon as possible after the legal gateway is in place. And we will work with local authorities to develop user guidance to ensure they can make best use of the data, and handle it appropriately, once it becomes available.

Contact: Louise Anderson at Louise.Anderson@gov.scot

ELC inspection

Inspection of services

HM Inspectors of Education (HMIE) have recently written to Directors of Education and head teachers confirming their intention to resume their routine programme of inspections from the next academic year following the pause in March 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The quality framework and indicators within *How Good Is Our Early Learning and Childcare?* will be continued to be used as the focus for their inspections.

From 1 June 2022 the Care Inspectorate will use their new [quality framework](#) in their inspections for day care of children, childminding and school-aged childcare services. The framework focuses on children's wellbeing and sets out the elements that will help answer key questions about the impact care and learning is making to outcomes for children. The framework is a self-evaluation tool to help settings self-evaluate their own performance in delivering high quality care and learning for children.

Consultation on the approach to inspection

Professor Muir's recommendations on education reform in Scotland provide an important opportunity for a wider debate about the role of inspection in delivering high quality day care of children services, and how this contributes to our national vision for the future of education in Scotland as a whole. We welcomed Professor Muir's recommendation that there should be a shared inspection framework for ELC and are listening to messages from the sector for a need to remove unnecessary burdens and duplication where possible.

We are working with Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and the Care Inspectorate to identify what they can do in partnership - from the start of the next academic year - to streamline and improve the inspection process for providers. Additionally, we are working towards launching a national consultation on options to improve and streamline the inspection of ELC, in line with the Cabinet Secretary's commitment to bring this forward before the summer. Details of how to participate will be available soon.

Contact: Francois Roos at Francois.Roos@gov.scot

Quality

The Scottish Government has funded a further extension to the Care Inspectorate ELC Quality Improvement Programme for 2022-23. The support available to providers and local authorities through this Programme is central to ensuring that funded ELC services across Scotland are supported to improve the quality of ELC provision as we work towards full implementation of Funding Follows the Child and the National Standard in August 2023, with a further review point later this year. The programme will focus on providing targeted support to existing funded ELC providers that do not have current Care Inspectorate evaluations of 'good' or better, but who have been commissioned to provide funded ELC hours, or that have previously achieved a grade of 'good' but are now at risk of falling below that at their next inspection.

This year all 32 local authorities areas had the opportunity to nominate services to participate. Co-hort 3 of the programme is now underway and nominations for co-hort 4 (due to start in September) will be invited in due course.

Further information on the programme, including a wide range of universal resources developed to support practitioners, can be found here: [Care Inspectorate iHub](#)

Contact: Helen Forde at helen.forde@gov.scot

Strategic plan

As set out in '[Best Start, Bright Futures](#)', the Scottish Government's Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan 2022-26, we are planning to publish a strategic plan at the end of the summer. This plan will set out our ambitions for the whole childcare and early learning system up to 2026 – including how we will realise the benefits of our current offers and begin planning to build capacity for further developments.

Contact: Stephen Edgar at Stephen.Edgar@gov.scot

Workforce strategy

We are working closely with leading partners to collaboratively develop a Childcare Workforce Strategy. The Strategy will reflect on learning from the expansion, and encompass the current and emerging priorities and ambitions of the sector for the coming months and years. A series of workshops will be held with members of the Childcare Workforce Strategy Group over the course of the Summer, to agree the challenges and interdependencies, and identify specific activity to address them.

Contact: Sarah Guy at Sarah.Guy@gov.scot

Professional learning

Continuous professional learning modules

Our suite of free online Continuous Professional Learning modules have now been fully updated and refreshed, in particular to strengthen practices related to the impacts of the pandemic. Providing focused learning on a range of identified topics to all ELC providers and workers, the modules can be accessed through [our website](#) and include:

- Understanding the social factors which may impact on children's outcomes in the early years;
- Supporting parents to further engage in their children's development;
- Supporting the development and progression of children's early language and literacy;
- Building confidence in identifying and responding to additional support needs;
- Staff skills, knowledge and confidence in delivering learning in STEM subjects.

Two further modules relating to tracking & monitoring children's progress, and curriculum rationale have been developed, and will be available on [our website](#) soon.

ELC national induction resource

The ELC National Induction Resource is being currently being refreshed. An updated version will be published on our website in June 2022.

Childminding-specific continuous professional learning modules

The Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA) have launched three new childminding-specific CPL courses for SCMA members, designed to help support childminders with how to review the care they are delivering, as well as looking ahead and planning for on-going improvement.

The first course is fully booked, however two further courses 'Reflective Practice' and 'Evidence in Practice' are due to be released in June 2022.

Building racial literacy programme applications

Applications for the national anti-racist professional learning programme, Building Racial Literacy, are now open until Monday 13th June. Two cohorts are planned, starting in August and December respectively, made up of 40% system leaders (e.g. members of staff from Education Scotland, GTCS, SQA, ITE, local authority officers, RIC leads and headteachers) and 60% educators (e.g. middle leaders, class teachers, ELC & CLD practitioners).

To find out more about the programme, please watch [this video](#) and visit this website: [Building Racial Literacy Programme \(education.gov.scot\)](#)

BRL+ webinars

Starting in June, the BRL+ webinar series explores anti-racism in Scottish education and it is an extension of the Building Racial Literacy professional learning programme. BRL+ will bring together some new collaborators as well as showcase innovative ideas and good practice from previous participants on the Building Racial Literacy programme. 3 webinars are planned for June:

- Anti-Racist Clubs on Monday 13th June: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/brl-webinar-on-anti-racist-clubs-tickets-339872496787>
- Anti-Racist Critical Thinking and Curriculum Design on Monday 20th June: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/brl-webinar-anti-racist-critical-thinking-and-curriculum-design-tickets-339925264617>
- Journey of an Anti-Racist Educator on Wednesday 22nd June: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/brl-series-journey-of-an-anti-racist-educator-tickets-339879186797>

Contact: Haylay Forbes at Haylay.Forbes@gov.scot

Childcare, Activities and Food

Building on the success of the 2021 “Get into Summer” programme, the Scottish Government is investing £10 million into a targeted summer holiday offer this year for children from low-income families. The funding has been allocated to local authorities to enable them to supplement their existing locally-funded holiday programmes, and deliver coordinated access to holiday food, activities and childcare for eligible school-age children from 5-14 years.

In the newly published [guidance](#), we are encouraging local authorities to work in close partnership with the third sector, out of school care sector and community and youth groups, harnessing their expertise to design and run services and activities that reflect the needs of local families. 2022 will be a year in which we can test change, strengthen local capacity and grow existing services to embed a holiday childcare offer as we build towards a sustainable system of year-round childcare in term time and the holidays.

Contact: Karen Fraser at holidayfoodandchildcare@gov.scot

Business Gateway support

We would like to make you aware of different forms of business support that are available to you. We realise that operating during the Covid pandemic has been very difficult for many services, and the Scottish Government appreciates the hard work that you have all undertaken to keep essential childcare provision available to children throughout Scotland.

However, some services may be experiencing difficulties in adapting to the changes that recent years have brought, or find that they are struggling financially. As part of the Financial Sustainability Health Check, the Scottish Government agreed that we would work to provide targeted business support for the sector, and explore what more can be done to help providers access existing support.

There is a lot of business support available through Business Gateway, which is all free. Some examples of Business Gateway provision which could be of interest to you are: [Business Gateway | Business Gateway \(bgateway.com\)](#)

For further information, please see the Business Gateway website.

You can sign up to Business Gateway's regular email newsletter updates, which will send you information on the latest guidance and support available, on a regular basis. Again, this is all free of charge. You can sign-up here: [Our Newsletter | Business Gateway \(bgateway.com\)](#)

Contact: Caroline Leburn at Caroline.Leburn@gov.scot

Education Scotland: Early Learning and Childcare Social Media Accounts

Education Scotland's Early Learning and Childcare social media accounts have a new look and a new name. The previous Twitter Handle of @CAFTeam has now been changed to @ESTeamELC and we have an updated logo.

If you previously followed the @CAFTeam accounts, you should automatically be redirected. However if you are not following us please add @ESTeamELC to your [Twitter](#) and [Wakelet](#) accounts to be kept up to date.

Contact: Allan Fleming at ESTeamELC@educationscotland.gov.scot

Publications

- 09/06/2022: [Early learning and childcare qualifications: recognition of prior learning \(RPL\)](#)
- 07/06/2022: [Safer sleep for babies: guide for professionals](#)
- 07/06/2022: [UK Government Response to Data Sharing Regulations Consultation](#)
- 26/05/2022: [Funding Follows the Child and the National Standard for Early Learning and Childcare Providers: interim guidance - update](#)
- 24/05/2022: [Local approaches to recovery: a thematic review \(Education Scotland\)](#)
- 22/02/2022: [Successful Approaches to Learning Outdoors, National Thematic Inspections \(Education Scotland\)](#)
- 28/01/2022: [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): organised activities for children](#)
- 13/01/2022: [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): early learning and childcare services guidance](#)
- 10/01/2022: [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): school age childcare services guidance](#)
- 10/01/2022: [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): childminder services guidance](#)
- 07/01/2022: [Early learning and childcare: national induction resource update](#)
- 11/10/2021: [Updated Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): school aged childcare services guidance](#)
- 11/10/2021: [Updated Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): childminder services guidance](#)
- 11/10/2021: [Updated Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): early learning and childcare guidance](#)
- 28/09/2021: [Perceptions of the impact of childminding services on child, parent and family outcomes: research findings](#)
- 16/09/2021: [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): managing cases in schools and childcare settings](#)
- 31/08/2021: [Financial sustainability health check of the childcare sector in Scotland](#)
- 31/08/2021: [Early learning and childcare providers - local authority funding and support: overview](#)
- 03/08/2021: [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): early learning and childcare \(ELC\) services - checklist of mitigations for Level 0 and below](#)
- 13/07/2021: [Early learning and childcare: statutory guidance - July 2021](#)
- 22/06/2021: [Early Learning and Childcare: 2 year old eligibility - Income Threshold Change – June 2021- EQIA](#)
- 22/06/2021: [Early Learning and Childcare: 2 year old eligibility – Income Threshold Change – June 2021- BRIA](#)
- 16/06/2021: [Early Learning and Childcare Expansion Delivery Progress Report, May 2021](#)
- 07/06/2021: [Scottish Milk and Healthy Snack Scheme: guidance for local authorities and day care settings](#)
- 24/03/2021: [Funding follows the child and the national standard for early learning and childcare providers: interim guidance - update March 2021](#)
- 24/03/2021: [Equity and excellence leads: Care Inspectorate findings](#)
- 17/03/2021: [Out to Play - creating outdoor play experiences for children: practical guidance - new chapters](#)
- 17/03/2021: [Nature-based early learning and childcare - influence on children's health, wellbeing and development: literature review](#)
- 15/03/2021: [Early Years providers helped to take first steps with with cyber security - National Cyber Security Centre](#)
- 15/03/2021: [Early Years providers helped to take first steps with cyber security - National Cyber Security Centre](#)
- 21/01/2021: [Our commitment to childminding: report](#)

