

**EARLY LEARNING & CHILDCARE
1140 HOURS EXPANSION**

Programme of Trials

SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT DISCUSSION PAPER

1. Introduction

This Government's Purpose is to make Scotland a more successful nation from which all of Scotland's people can benefit. To achieve this and enhance our ability to compete, we need to tackle some of the significant inequalities which persist in Scotland. Tackling risks early and building the resilience of children, young people and families will improve the educational, health and employment outcomes of our people.

This is why we have placed children and families at the heart of policy making as a key element of our vision to:

“make Scotland the best place in the world to grow up in by improving outcomes and reducing inequalities for all babies, children, mothers, fathers and families across Scotland to ensure that all children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed”.

Our aim is to develop high quality, flexible early learning and childcare (ELC) which is affordable and accessible for all. This means the whole system - including out of school care - and not just the Government funded hours.

Currently, free provision of early learning and child care is offered to all 3 and 4 year olds, as well as eligible 2 year olds. From August 2014, free provision increased to 600 hours per year, equivalent to around 16 hours per week if delivered during school term time. However, we are committed to increasing the early learning and childcare entitlement to 1140 hours per year by 2020. This will continue to cover all 3 and 4 year old children, and eligible 2 year olds. High quality will be at the heart of ELC provision, as will providing the flexibility parents need to work, train or study.

In preparation for the expansion to 1140 hours of ELC, we will establish a programme of trials testing a variety of delivery models. The aim of these trials will be to test how best to deliver ELC to all eligible children across a spectrum of differing requirements. The intention will be to develop case studies of what works, where and why, and to assist in the dissemination of best practice across local authorities and providers. In doing so, we will ensure that the expansion to 1140 hours of free provision delivers the benefits to children and families in Scotland that will be vital in achieving our ambitions.

This commitment by the First Minister will transform the lives of families across Scotland. It is during our very earliest years that a large part of the pattern for our future adult life is set. This is true in terms of educational outcomes, health outcomes, and future life prospects. Evidence shows that disadvantages experienced from birth onwards can impact adversely on the life chances of our children. Estimates suggest that by age 5, children in more advantaged circumstances are between 11-18 months ahead in their expressive vocabulary skills and between 6-13 months ahead in their problem solving ability¹. The impact of this

¹ Bradshaw, P (2011) Changes in Child Cognitive Ability in the Pre-school Years, Edinburgh, Scottish Government <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/350161/0117210.pdf>

disadvantage can be seen throughout an individual's life, in poor health, employment and social outcomes.

Improving access to affordable ELC also helps to reduce barriers to participating in the labour market which parents with small children face. For example the OECD's Doing Better for Families report highlights that childcare constraints often play an important role in parents' work decisions, and that provision of more comprehensive childcare helps remove barriers to employment.² We have observed that, as ELC in Scotland has expanded, levels of female employment have risen. In April-June 2015, Scotland had the second highest female employment rate amongst the EU 28 countries.

Co-design of services

We want the scale of this ambition to be matched by the quality of the delivery of the commitment, and to demonstrate how the Scottish Government engages with the people of Scotland to co-design its public services, by:

1. building on the assets and strengths of individuals and communities,
2. developing policy *with* people rather than imposing it *on* them, and
3. committing to continuous improvement

Delivery of ELC via local government (who also commission ELC locally, and are a crucial partner in our expansion plans), the private and voluntary sectors means Scottish Government must act in partnership with its key stakeholders to ensure the delivered services meet the needs of all parents and children. By acknowledging our stakeholders as key delivery partners and by sharing responsibility for co-designing these services with them, this discussion paper reflects each of these three themes.

The primary aim of this discussion paper is to enable all stakeholders and delivery partners to contribute to the scope and design of these trials. We want to ensure provision of a service that is valuable, effective and feasible. In doing so, it is imperative that all people involved in the system – including those either using or providing the service - have a say in the key features that should be considered. To assist in this dialogue, this paper sets out an overview of our policy on ELC, the benefits that derive from ELC and the rationale for conducting a programme of trials. It also includes a selection of case studies of existing innovative practice.

As part of our broader engagement process, we will also be supplementing this paper with a series of bespoke engagement events. This will include an ELC National Summit in February. Information and opinions presented to us through all these fora will help determine the shape of the subsequent programme of trials.

² OECD (2011), Doing Better for Families <http://www.oecd.org/social/soc/doingbetterforfamilies.htm>

Rationale for trials

The Scottish Government is fully committed to driving, enabling and supporting this transformative change, and delivering the commitment together with our partners. We are therefore setting up a programme of trials that test different delivery models. The aim of these trials will be to test how best to deliver ELC in a way that meets users' needs and can take account of local requirements and conditions.

The trials will identify what works, where and why, and share best practice across local authorities and providers. We also expect the trials to:

- test innovative models of ELC delivery, including affordability and feasibility
- provide a foundation for the sharing of best practice
- stimulate growth in the local market and increase capacity in ELC settings (including with childminders and schools)
- reaffirm our commitment to good quality ELC – including measuring impacts on child outcomes and,
- encourage parental demand for the new entitlement and overcoming barriers to take-up, including how ELC might work for the most vulnerable by funding support in the home to access formal childcare.

To ensure the delivery models test a variety of approaches that benefit providers, children and parents alike, we are asking delivery partners and users to co-design the delivery models to be tested.

We will ensure the trials are fully evaluated: we will examine the actual implementation and impacts of the delivery model to assess its anticipated and unintended effects, costs and benefits. Evaluation findings can identify “what works”, where problems arise, highlight good practice, identify unintended consequences or unanticipated results and demonstrate value for money, and hence can be fed back into the appraisal process to improve future decision-making.

Desired features of an ELC system

As we expand ELC in the coming years, our commitment to ensure both quality and flexibility is set in stone. The remainder of this paper elaborates on these themes in greater detail. **To inform the design of our programme of trials, we would welcome feedback from all stakeholders on the following areas:**

1. *What should be the key features of Scotland's ELC model?*
 - We know that providing ELC to families has a positive impact on many areas of their lives: these include child development, narrowing the attainment gap, allowing parents to work, train or study, as well as fighting poverty and inequality in our communities. What are the features that we fundamentally cannot compromise on within our ELC delivery model. Are there additional outcomes not referenced here that our ELC policy should aim to achieve?
2. *Which specific principles of ELC models should be prioritised within our programme of trials?*

- Different models of ELC provision might be better at delivering different outcomes. The principles we would like to see provision based on might include (but are not limited to): providing quality, flexibility, fairness, promoting parental choice, accessibility, integration with other services, value for money (for whom? the user, the provider or both?), integration with home life, enabling work, addressing the differing needs of 2, 3 and 4 year olds, and sustainability, among others. Some of these principles may already be more firmly established than others. What principles should take priority? Which would you like to see trialled?
3. *What do you see as the key barriers to a successful implementation of the 1140 hours commitment?*
 - What are the main risks in implementing this commitment by August 2020? Barriers might be financial, organisational, cultural, or might take some other form entirely. What stands in the way of this commitment being delivered successfully for users and providers alike?
 4. *How might these trials be designed to overcome such barriers?*
 - We want to know what these barriers are so we can test different approaches, develop critical understanding of what is effective and feasible, and to share best practice amongst all those with a role in delivery? How would you like the design of the trials to reflect this?
 5. *Are there existing examples of best practice within ELC provision that you can share with us?*
 - What providers already offer users an outstanding service? What features of their work makes their provision exceptional? These might include either outstanding overall or specialised services, or a response to a particular local challenge.
 6. *Are there existing examples of innovative delivery within ELC provision that you can share with us?*
 - Do you know of innovative approaches to providing high quality, flexible ELC anywhere in the world from which we should be learning? Are there existing innovative delivery models in Scotland whose impact you would be interested to see evaluated ?
 7. *What outcomes should we be measuring through this programme of trials?*
 - What would a successful trial look like, and how would we measure it? What indicators will be needed to inform decisions on future delivery? What areas of children's and families' lives might the expansion of high quality, flexible ELC have a positive impact on? How would we measure the impact of a particular delivery model on providers and other stakeholders?
 8. *Are there other services for children and young people that the trials should be integrated with?*
 - Children and Families use a variety of national and local services, and co-locating or linking these with Early Learning and Childcare provision may bring benefits to users and/or providers of the service – these benefits might mean more integrated services which are better, more convenient and/or easier to access; they might provide better value for money or raise awareness of common interests. What opportunities might exist, and how might these be trialled?

9. *Are there local/regional characteristics that should be explicitly built into the trials?*

- Scotland is a country with great regional and local diversity, and in order to be successful, the models of ELC provision will need to be cognisant of and reflect these local needs. Which local/regional characteristics most preclude a 'one-size-fits-all' approach? What responses to specific local challenges might ELC trials need to address to be of real value?

10. *How can we design trials in such a way as to ensure scalability?*

- To maximise the value of this programme, we want to ensure that the lessons we learn from our chosen trials can be applied to similar ELC settings in Scotland. What do we need to factor into the design of the trials to enable this?

11. *Would you be interested in being involved in the programme of trials? If so, in what capacity?*

See How to Respond section at end of this document.

2. Policy overview

The Scottish Government is committed to putting children and families at the heart of policy making as a key element of our vision, as captured in the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 to:

“make Scotland the best place in the world to grow up in by improving outcomes and reducing inequalities for all babies, children, mothers, fathers and families across Scotland to ensure that all children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed”.

Regarding ELC specifically, our stated ambition is to develop a high quality, flexible system – integrated with out of school care - which is accessible and affordable for all.

There are four main reasons for state provision of ELC, as set out by the European Commission and OECD, and to which Scotland subscribes:

1. To promote social justice by providing the best start in life for all children and thereby improve children’s outcomes
2. To develop gender equality, particularly in labour market participation
3. To reduce future costs on demand for public services
4. To encourage economic growth

Our approach is therefore fundamental to the two key pillars within the Scottish Economic Strategy of increasing competitiveness and tackling inequality.

Key dates and developments

The Scottish Government increased the entitlement to free ELC from 475 to 600 hours per year through the Children & Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, and has pledged to increase this entitlement to 1140 hours per year by the end of the next Parliament – equivalent to around 30 hours per week if delivered during term time. Key dates are summarised below:

Key dates and developments in early learning and child care provision in Scotland				
2000	2002	2007	2014	2020
<p>Standards in Scotland’s Schools etc Act</p> <p>places a duty on local authorities to secure a pre-school education place for all 3 and 4 year olds whose parents wished this.</p>	<p>Free pre-school education introduced</p> <p>412.5 hours pa, normally delivered 2.5 hours per day over 33 weeks.</p>	<p>Free pre-school education increased</p> <p>to 475 hours pa, normally delivered 2.5 hours per day over 38 weeks.</p>	<p>Children & Young People Act</p> <p>free ELC increased to 600 hours pa - initially delivered via five 3 hour 10 minute sessions per week over 38 weeks. Statutory requirement on local authorities to consult with parents every 2 years.</p>	<p>1140 free hours ELC per year</p> <p>Delivering high quality ELC with greater flexibility for parents/carers and other beneficiaries e.g. employers.</p>

Current free early learning and child care entitlement - 600 hours pa

Currently, free provision of early learning and child care is offered to all 3 and 4 year olds, as well as eligible 2 year olds. From August 2014, free provision increased to 600 hours per year, equivalent to around 16 hours per week if delivered during school term time. Local authorities are fully funded to provide this additional provision, and secure it through both their own services and partner providers. Increased choice and flexibility based on local consultation should ensure a range of options within a framework of minimum 2.5 hours per day up to a maximum of 8 hours.

Case study

Early learning and child care for eligible 2 year olds

Gail Wallace, 31, from Kingsway, Dundee is mother to three boys. The manager of the Rowantree Nursery School, which her older children already attended, told her that two year old Rhys was eligible for free early learning and childcare hours. He started in August last year.

“The real difference to me was that it gave me the time to look a job. I didn’t have any childcare arrangements for Rhys which made things like going to the Jobcentre very difficult. Once Rhys was in nursery, I was able to go to the library round the corner to work on my CV and apply for jobs. I now have a part-time job in catering and our family is better off financially. If the childcare hadn’t been free I wouldn’t have been able to pursue my job hunt until Rhys turned three.”

The free early learning and childcare hours have also benefitted Rhys.

“His speech and social skills have got better and he has learnt new things like nursery rhymes. The rules and routine that we teach him at home are reinforced at nursery and he has got a lot better at sharing with his brothers. I have seen a real difference in the way he plays with his brothers now and I think that’s because at nursery, he is sharing toys and interacting with a lot more children.

“I know from my experience with my oldest child that nursery is great in getting them ready for school. I have no hesitation in recommending early learning and childcare to other parents.”

The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014

The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 was passed by the Scottish Parliament in February 2014, and received Royal Assent in March 2014. Since August 2014 the Act has strengthened the role of early learning and childcare in children's and families' lives. The Act has increased the amount of funded early learning and childcare from 475 to 600 hours a year for all 3 and 4 year olds. This offer has also been extended to 2 year olds for the first time over a 2 year period. Since August 2014, this has included those who are, or have been at any point since their second birthday, looked after, under a kinship care or guardianship order, and those with a parent in receipt of out of work benefits, reaching around 15% of all 2 year olds. From August 2015, the offer has been extended further to those who meet the free school meal criteria, this includes families on low incomes.

By the start of the summer term in 2016, 27% of all 2 year olds in Scotland will be eligible, which is around 20,000 2 year olds per year. This is in addition to an estimated 120,000 three and four year olds; therefore, around 140,000 children are eligible and able to benefit from funded places in Scotland.

The Act has also placed flexibility on a statutory footing for the first time. There is now a duty on local authorities which requires them to consult at least once every 2 years with representative groups of local parents on patterns of provision which will best meet their needs. This will allow local authorities to plan how they will reconfigure services to better meet the needs of working parents and should introduce a greater level of flexibility and choice in to the system, year on year.

Since the Act has been passed we have also developed statutory guidance to support local authorities with implementation, and we have developed guidance for practitioners called Building the Ambition. This will support practitioners to deliver high quality early learning and childcare experiences for our young children.

Future increase in free early learning and child care entitlement - 1140 hours pa

In the 'One Scotland' Programme for Government 2014-2015³, the foreword by the First Minister states that:

"In the coming year we will support the provision of 600 hours of childcare to over 120,000 3 and 4 year olds and eligible 2 year olds. In the years ahead we want to build upon that to almost double the number of free hours to 30 hours a week of free childcare by the end of the next Parliament, and we will begin to plan for this expansion immediately."

This planned increase in entitlement will continue to cover all 3 and 4 year old children, and eligible 2 year olds; and to support families to secure sustainable employment or routes out of poverty. Providing more flexible provision will be a key element of the expansion to 1140 hours pa. We will build on the work done through the 'Scotland's Schools for the Future Programme' and the Scottish Futures Trust to

³ One Scotland' Programme for Government 2014-2015, Scottish Government
<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0046/00464455.pdf>

support the expansion of local authority accommodation; and the recent workforce review under taken by Professor Iram Siraj, to ensure that quality is at the heart of the forthcoming expansion of the workforce.

3. The importance of early learning & childcare

The benefits of early learning and childcare

A considerable body of evidence has shown the substantial benefits of early learning and childcare for children:

- There are positive behavioural outcomes in terms of independence, sociability and concentration
- Early years education benefits children's learning, improves their confidence and peer relationships, and can help to break cycles of poverty
- Children's language and cognitive development also benefit , which increases depending on the length of time, in months and years, spent in childcare settings
- It is the earlier attendance at preschool that is influential in terms of positive child outcomes.

Evidence also demonstrates the benefits of childcare to parents:

- provision of subsidised early learning and childcare increases female labour force participation
- Where subsidised childcare removes barriers to employment it can help lift families out of poverty and help parents gain further skills, enhancing their employability and future earnings.

In addition, there are several tangible benefits to society and the wider economy:

- investment in the sector, promotes jobs growth, which in turn supplements income tax receipts for governments and alleviates pensions shortfalls for women
- Such policies that promote motherhood and work, such as subsidised childcare, have positive and lasting impacts on country fertility rates, which in turn assure future workforce and the financing of future services
- By serving a redistributive function, universal ELC mitigates the impacts of early economic and social disadvantage and promotes longer term economic benefits which are shared by all of society. The returns to such investments among vulnerable groups are well documented and stem from children's improved cognitive and non-cognitive skills, which in turn feed through to improved educational, social and employment outcomes, reduced dependence on the state and reduced criminal behaviour.

Case study

The Blended Childcare Model

A blended childcare model would involve the 30 weekly hours of ELC being delivered over 5 days a week, with half days at nursery and half days with a childminder, to allow children to benefit both from the group care model and from a home learning environment.

Evidence suggests that children benefit from regular nursery attendance, but has been measured mainly in children attending regular part day sessions four or five days a week. By combining a half day at nursery with a half day with a childminder, the child will access all of the benefits of nursery attendance, but will also be able to experience a rich out-of-nursery learning environment – which is particularly important for the most disadvantaged children who may not have access to this at home.

Blended childcare in practice

Katy had been cared for by a childminder for a year before she became eligible for funded Early Learning and Childcare at age 3. Her mum works full days while dad is self-employed and works from home. The nursery which feeds the local primary school offers morning hours only, but Katy's mum cannot leave work to collect Katy in the middle of the day, and her dad can't drive – the nursery is three miles away and not accessible by public transport.

Katy's parents wanted to blend the childminding service where she was already settled with the benefits of attending nursery with her peers. She now attends nursery two mornings a week and uses the rest of her 600 hours' free entitlement with the childminder, who collects her from nursery – enabling Katy's full entitlement to be taken over two full days. The childminder has access to the same support from the council that is enjoyed by partner provider nurseries and can access CPD workshops provided by SCMA.

Education Attainment and Fulfilling Potential

Over the long-term, a wide range of evidence documents the social and educational benefits of high quality early learning and childcare, with all social groups benefiting and children from the poorest families gaining the most.

Research by the Scottish Government⁴ drawing on the findings of three major studies, confirms that pre-school experiences enhance all-round development in children, with improved cognitive development, sociability and concentration on

⁴ Childcare and Children's Intellectual Outcomes, Scottish Government, April 2014, <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0044/00449528.pdf>

starting school. The effects are evident throughout primary school, and international evidence finds that these benefits persist into secondary school.

Early learning and childcare is an effective form of preventative spend. Several long-term studies find significant positive impacts in later life (age 40+) among early learning program participants. These studies cite economic benefits associated with

Integration with other services

Case study

Woodburn Family Learning Centre, Midlothian

Midlothian Council wants to establish integrated family learning centres in key priority areas. This approach will provide early intervention support to children and their families by integrating Woodburn primary school and nursery, Sure Start Midlothian, and speech and languages services in a single location. The centre is due to open in Feb 2016 and will engage parents in their children's learning and development from 0-5.

Fort Family Learning Centre (Leith, Edinburgh)

Fort Community Wing has grown from running a few youth clubs into a busy community centre with adult education, out of school care, community groups and sports activities added to the long-running youth clubs. The closure of Fort Primary School in 2010 allowed the Centre to expand, gaining new office space, exclusive use of the gym hall and access to the playground and playing field. The centre works in partnership with Fort Early Years Centre and North Edinburgh Childcare to deliver joint activities surrounding the new community garden space.

St Mirins Out of School Care Service, Glasgow

St Mirins are the first service to achieve the Scottish Out of School Care Network (SOSCN) *Achieving Quality Scotland (AQS)* quality award at the highest Gold level. Children are regularly consulted on all club decisions on activities or purchases, can sign off relevant policies, are involved in interviewing and selecting staff for the service and lead the care inspection process. The service is pro-active in local childcare and Glasgow wide forums of OSC and ELC providers, and has developed a close partnership with the head teacher of the primary school to discuss joint support for individual children. The Care Inspectorate also recognise St Mirins as [exemplary](#) by awarding the services the highest grades.

children's enhanced cognitive and non-cognitive skills, which in turn feed through to improved educational, social and employment outcomes, reduced dependence on the state and reduced criminality in the longer term. Such preventative approaches could in turn bolster employability and competitiveness.

Quality in early learning and childcare

A range of research evidence indicates that provision must be of high quality if these benefits for child outcomes are to be realised.

Quality provision could be understood as that which supports positive child development and helps children to develop their cognitive, social and behavioural skills. Quality can be measured in a number of different ways and there is no singly agreed definition, but two broad dimensions that are consistently identified as facilitating children's development and learning: the processes of delivering learning and care, and the structural aspects such as ratios and the physical environment.

Within these broad dimensions, there are a number of components that are generally understood to contribute to high quality provision. For example, the OECD have analysed childcare across OECD countries and highlighted aspects of quality which have an impact on improving outcomes for children⁵. These are focused on the structural inputs which underpin high quality processes:

- Staff-child ratios and group size
- Staff qualification level and specialised training
- Staff salaries
- Curriculum
- Physical environment
- Staff gender and diversity

The Effective Provision of Pre-School Education study (EPPE)⁶ study looks in more depth at what characterises effective provision and practice, and highlights the importance of staff interactions; where staff showed warmth and were responsive to the individual needs of children, children made more progress.

There is evidence that children make more progress in pre-school centres where staff (particularly the manager) have higher qualifications. The OECD suggest it is not the qualification per se, but rather the ability of the staff to create a high-quality pedagogic environment that matters. The OECD recognise that this can be achieved with differing grades of staff and that having one graduate staff member is shown to have positive impacts upon the skills and practice of other staff who are less qualified. More specialised staff education and training is found to be strongly associated with stable sensitive and stimulating interactions in settings – but this need not be graduate level education.

An Independent Review of the Scottish Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) Workforce and Out of School Care (OSC) Workforce

Given the importance of factors relating to staff in ensuring quality provision, Scottish Government commissioned Professor Iram Siraj of the Institute of Education at

⁵ OECD (2012), Starting Strong III: A Quality Toolbox for Early Childhood Education and Care, OECD publishing. <http://www.oecd.org/edu/school/startingstrongiii-aqualitytoolboxforearlychildhoodeducationandcare.htm>

⁶ Sylva, K et al (2012) Influences on Student's Development from age 11-14, Final Report from Key Stage 3 Phase, EPPE; https://www.ioe.ac.uk/KS3_final_report_RB.pdf

University College London, a principal researcher on the EPPE project, to conduct an independent Review of Early Learning and Childcare Workforce and Out of School Care Workforce in 2014⁷. She looked at a range of issues including the qualifications, skills, career paths and status of the workforce, and made 31 wide-ranging recommendations to the Scottish Government in her report, published in June 2015.

Scottish Government published its response to the Siraj review on 4 December 2015, and will work with the newly constituted, cross-sectoral Workforce and Quality Group to look at taking forward the recommendations, in the context of planning for the expansion of workforce which will be required to deliver the forthcoming

Case study

Flexible delivery within the Scottish Borders

Scottish Borders have worked in partnership with childminders since before the 1989 Children Act. In 2005, they set up a “Supported Childminding Scheme” for families requiring a short term intervention to help them through a crisis. With the introduction of the 2014 CYP Act, they were therefore in a good position to include childminders in their delivery model.

The authority have two childminders on a pilot scheme delivering ELC to 3 and 4 year olds, now in its 2nd year. This was in direct response to parental requests – one is in a very rural area with no other provision close by. The Council are about to start a review of the pilot, including consultation with Education Scotland, looking at the outcomes for the children.

The Council also currently has contracts with seven childminders to deliver ELC to 2 year olds. They have encouraged their private and voluntary sector commissioned providers to provide a flexible service to meet the needs of parents where they are able to do this. This mixed pattern of delivery is able to offer school holiday provision and split placements. Within their own local authority settings some children are also able to have full days where there is wraparound provision in the school.

expansion of funded early learning and childcare by 2020.

In addition, the First Minister recently announced that, given a range of evidence that children facing particular disadvantages benefit most from high quality provision, all nurseries in the most deprived areas in Scotland would, by 2018, have an additional qualified teacher or childcare graduate. The current requirement is that each nursery must have a manager who is a graduate (or studying for a Childhood Practitioner

⁷ Siraj, I (2015) An Independent Review of the Scottish Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) Workforce and Out of School Care (OSC) Workforce <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0047/00477419.pdf>

degree). This announcement means that by 2018 a second member of staff will be required to have a degree, or be studying for that degree.

Meeting Parental Needs

As well as the directly experienced benefits to the child, childcare is also an important factor in enabling parental (primarily maternal) employment – which in turn can work to alleviate household experience of poverty.

A range of evidence shows that a lack of affordable childcare poses a significant barrier to work and that childcare costs are a concern for many parents:

- A recent survey on childcare and work decisions undertaken by DWP⁸ found that more than twice as many parents that used childcare for work purposes reported difficulty meeting the cost (48%) than those who reported they found it easy or very easy (21%).
- Amongst families reporting that they wanted to work more, around a third (33%) cited the main reason for not doing so to be related to the affordability of formal childcare.
- Childcare costs as a proportion of family income in the UK were the highest across the OECD in 2012, comprising 29% of net family income.
- A survey by Save the Children and Daycare Trust (which included Scottish parents) found that cost is a major barrier preventing parents on the lowest incomes from accessing childcare. The Growing Up in Scotland study also found that over half of unemployed parents would prefer to work or study if they were able to afford good quality reliable childcare.
- International evidence reviewed by IPPR⁹ suggests that as countries make childcare more available and affordable, those mothers on the margins of employment are most likely to respond by increasing their hours of work.

Scottish Government is committed to significantly increasing the hours of funded early learning and childcare which parents of young children can access, and to ensuring that those hours of provision are delivered flexibly, to better meet the needs of parents seeking to balance their childcare needs with work, study or training.

⁸ DWP (2013) A survey of childcare and work decisions among families with children
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/221221/WP114.pdf

⁹ IPPR (2014), Women and flexible working: Improving female employment outcomes in Europe
<http://ippr.org/read/women-and-flexible-working-improving-female-employment-outcomes-in-europe#>

HOW TO RESPOND

Discussion questions are listed on pages 5-6. We would welcome comments on some or all of the questions, or more general responses to the issues identified in the discussion paper.

- By post to:

Early Learning & Childcare Team

Scottish Government

Area 2-C North

Victoria Quay

Edinburgh

EH6 6QQ

- By email to ELCTrials@gov.scot
- Online via CitizenSpace at the following link:
<https://consult.scotland.gov.uk/digital-communications/childcare-expansion>

If not responding via CitizenSpace, please complete the Respondent Form on the next page and send this with your comments.

The paper is out for views until **18 March 2016**. It is available electronically on the Scottish Government's website at <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/Recent> and in hard copy from the above address.

Handling your response

We need to know whether you are happy for your response to be made public. If you ask for your response not to be made public we will regard it as confidential, and we will treat it accordingly.

All respondents should be aware that the Scottish Government is subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 and would therefore have to consider any request made to it under the Act for information relating to responses made to this consultation exercise.

If you have any comments about how this exercise has been conducted, please send them to us at the above address.

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Programme of Trials**

Responses to the Scottish Government Discussion Paper

Please complete this form and return it with your comments.

Organisation name (if applicable):

Organisation address (if applicable):

Contact name:

Email address:

Phone number:

Please describe your connection to early learning and childcare and/or out of school care provision:

Name(s) of the Local Authority or area(s) in which you work/you are discussing:

Do you give permission for Scottish Government to publish your response?

Would you be happy for Scottish Government to contact you again?

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