



Early Learning and Childcare Expansion Delivery Progress Report

December 2019



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
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Key Messages



- This is the latest in a series of data collections which track the progress towards delivering the expansion of funded early learning and childcare hours to 1140 a year from August 2020
- This report summarises the progress of the ELC Expansion at the end of September 2019
- The data collected indicates that the implementation of the expansion at the national level is broadly in line with forecasts provided by councils earlier in September 2019
- At the end of September 2019 the total number of children reported to be receiving more than 600 hours of funded ELC across all settings was 49,213
- As predicted by forecasts, there has not been a significant change in the expansion between August 2019 (“One Year To Go”) and September 2019
- Returns continue to show variability at the local level, however the scale of variability is reduced compared to previous reporting periods, and is within expected ranges

Background and Context

The Scottish Government and Local Government are committed to increasing funded Early Learning and Childcare entitlement to 1140 hours per year from August 2020 for all 3 and 4-year-olds and for eligible 2-year-olds. The expansion is a cornerstone in helping every child to fulfil their potential and to close the poverty-related attainment gap.

To provide information on the implementation of this commitment, the Improvement Service (IS) and Scottish Futures Trust (SFT) collect and analyse data on the progress of the delivery of the expansion programmes across local authorities.

This report informs the Joint Delivery Board. Co-chaired by the Minister for Children and Young People and the COSLA Spokesperson for Children and Young People, the Joint Delivery Board is responsible for reviewing progress towards implementation of the 1140 hours offer across all 32 local authorities and for agreeing actions to mitigate risk, respond to emerging issues or put support in place where that may be required.

Objectives, Approach and Methodology

The key objective of the current data collection has been to establish actual progress made against forecasts for the end of September 2019. In line with a planned data change control point, new forecasts for key indicators were submitted by councils in early September 2019. This report provides the first analysis and informational summaries of actual progress made against those new forecasts.

It should be noted that during the data control point, a small number of local authorities were not able to provide updates to their forecasts in time for the data return. Where these forecast updates were subsequently received, they have been incorporated into the data to ensure as accurate a measure of progress as possible.

To collect the data, all 32 Scottish local authorities were issued with a template spreadsheet and guidance document containing instructions for completion and detailed definitions for each of the key readiness indicators to be measured. For each indicator, the forecast figure lays out the plan for the period, whilst the actual data states the results. The progress made can be understood by comparing the two. More information on each indicator can be found in Appendix 1.

In isolation, the data does not offer insight into why forecasts have or have not been met in each authority and it does not necessarily follow that those who have not met the forecast are behind in their project delivery. As such, local authorities can provide a free text narrative to support their data returns.

SFT collects ELC infrastructure data on a quarterly basis from local authorities. SFT have provided a short commentary on the progress of the infrastructure programme which is included in this report.

Although the IS and SFT have liaised with individual local authorities in seeking to ensure consistency of data returns, they have not undertaken an audit of the data, systems and processes used to capture the data within the 32 local authorities. The data submitted by local authorities is, therefore, presented in good faith without having been audited by the IS or SFT.

Responses

All 32 local authorities provided actual data for September 2019.

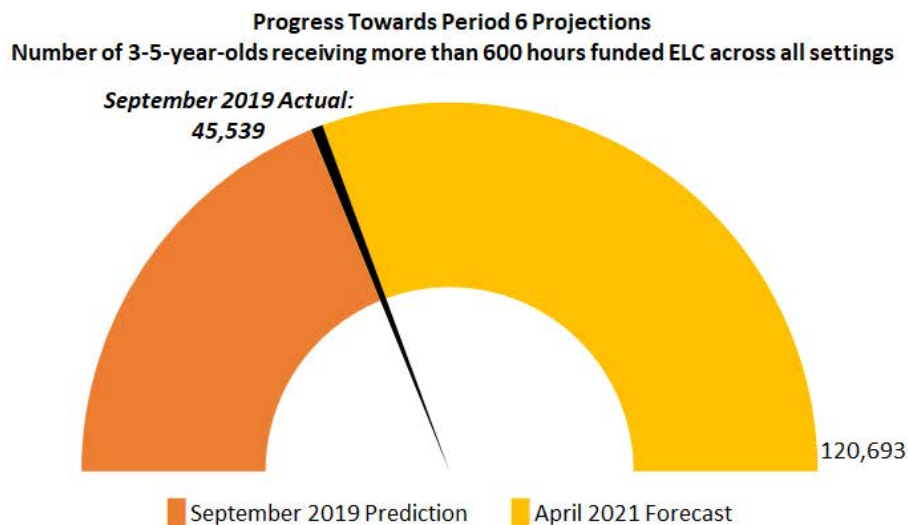
There are a small number of authorities whose data returns required further assurance to confirm figures. Following data assurance pursued by the Improvement Service, inaccuracies were found in two local authorities' previously submitted forecast updates. For the purposes of this report, where updated forecast figures were found to be inaccurate, 'forecast' and 'actual' figures for Period 3 are treated as identical so as not to impact the collated national position.

The ELC infrastructure data is based on information collected by SFT up to October 2019.

Analysis

Number of 3 to 5-year-olds receiving more than 600 hours funded ELC

Figure 1: 3- to 5-year-old uptake



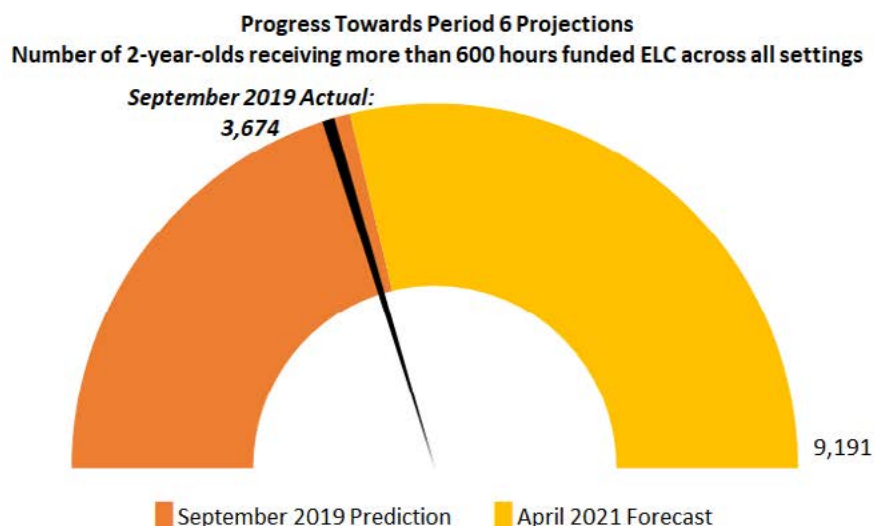
The number of 3 to 5-year-olds receiving more than 600 hours of funded ELC is in line with, and slightly higher than the figure predicted for September 2019. The forecast uptake for 3 to 5-year-olds accessing more than 600 hours funded ELC across all settings was 45,488 children at the end of September 2019. The actual figure was 45,539 children, 0.1% higher than predicted.

This is an increase of 2,230 children since the figure reported at August 2019.

There is seen to be variability at the local level, with a number of councils being ahead of forecast position and a number behind. Variability is reduced compared to previous data collections, with more councils being closer to their forecast position.

Number of 2-year-olds receiving more than 600 hours funded ELC

Figure 2: 2-year-old uptake



The number of 2-year-olds receiving more than 600 hours of funded ELC at the end of September 2019 across all setting is less than the figure of 3,905 that was predicted. The actual figure was 5.9% lower than predicted at 3,674 children.

This is an increase of 436 children since the figure reported at August 2019.

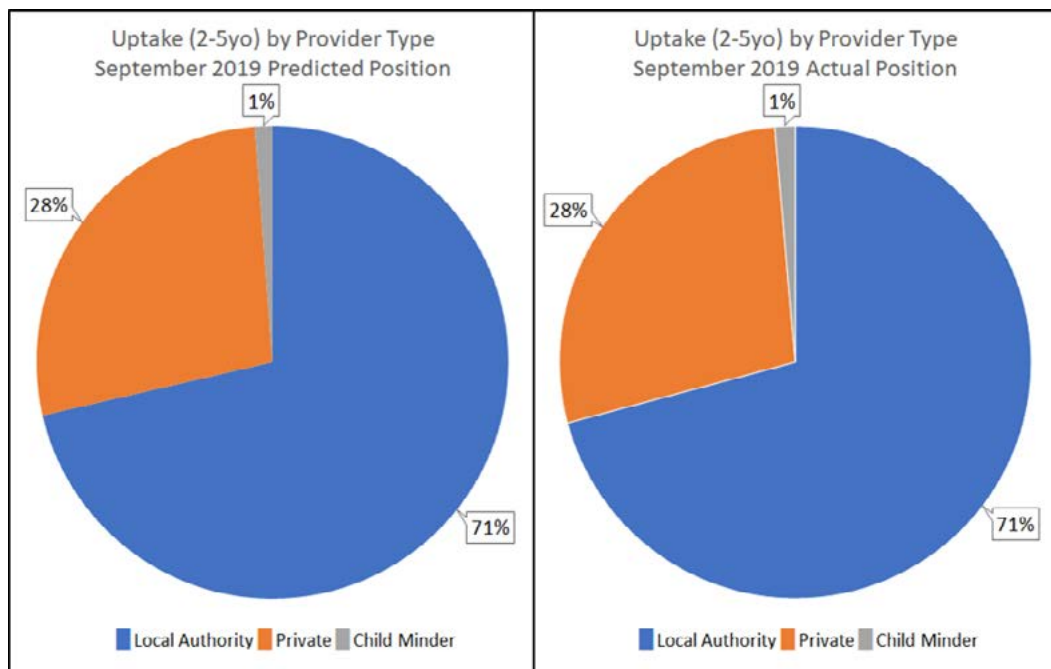
Once again there is significant variability seen across the country, with a number of councils being ahead of forecast position and a number behind.

Narrative returned by some local authorities notes that the number of eligible 2-year-olds is difficult to predict, and uptake amongst those eligible is more difficult still. Despite this being the most variable indicator, variability is reduced compared to previous data collections, with more councils being closer to their forecast position.

Provision in Local Authority, Private Partner and Childminder Settings

The graphs below show the proportion of uptake by provider types. The first chart shows the position that was predicted for September 2019. The second shows the actual reported split at September 2019.

Figure 3: Split of provider type

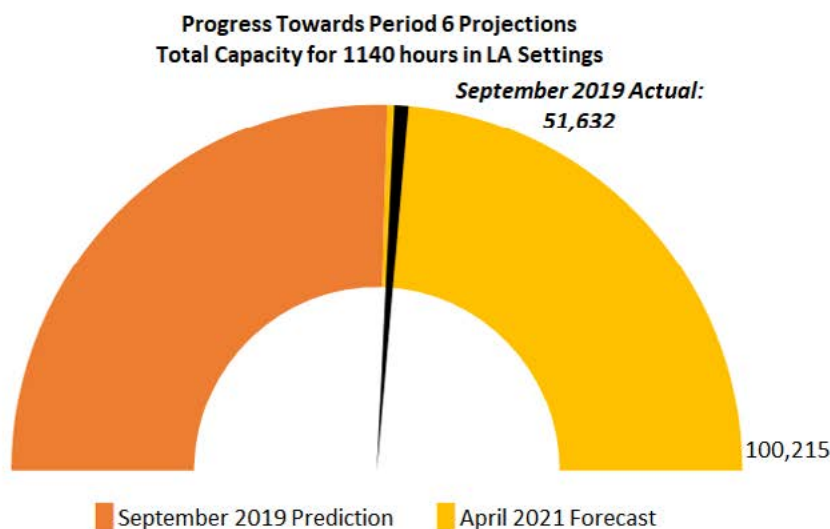


The pie chart on the left shows that for September 2019, nationally it was forecast that 28% of provision would be supplied in private settings, compared to 71% in local authority settings, with the remainder being taken by childminders. The pie chart on the right shows that the actual provision in private settings was in line with this forecast.

Narrative collected in the returns indicates that local authorities are continuing to involve private and third sector providers in the phasing of the expanded entitlement.

Capacity for 1140 hours in local authority settings

Figure 4: Local authority capacity



The actual capacity for 1140 hours in local authority settings for September 2019 was in line with that predicted. The predicted total capacity for 1140 hours funded ELC in local authority settings was 51,027 children at September 2019. The actual figure was 1.2% higher than the forecast at 51,632 children. Over half of the total capacity forecast to be required in local authority settings is now in place.

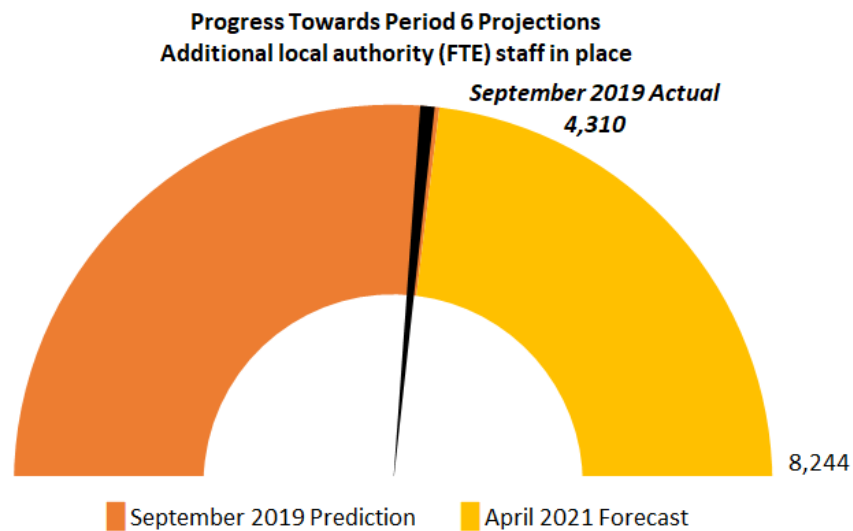
This sees an increase in total capacity in local authority settings of 4,923 since August 2019.

Variability at the local level is a continued theme in this indicator, with some local authorities ahead of predicted position and some behind. Variability is reduced compared to previous data collections, with more councils being closer to their forecast position.

Narrative returned suggests that capacity generation is lower than forecast in some areas due to delays in capital projects, or due to delays in new staff completing their PVG (Protecting Vulnerable Groups) checks.

Additional local authority staff in place

Figure 5: Workforce



Recruitment was in line with, if slightly lower than predicted in September 2019. The predicted number of additional full-time equivalent (FTE) staff in place in September 2019 was 4,444. The actual figure for the period was 3.0% less than predicted at 4,310 FTE.

This is an additional 242 FTE since August 2019.

Variability at the local level is seen within this indicator also. Variability is reduced compared to previous data collections, with more councils being closer to their forecast position.

Narrative provided by some authorities confirms that recruitment for some types of roles, especially managerial and senior early years practitioner positions, remains challenging.

A small number of authorities noted delays experienced in capital projects meaning that some settings that were due to begin delivering expanded hours did not, and therefore the additionality of staff was not required at this point in time. The additional narrative also indicates that there are a number of additional staff that have been recruited but are not 'in place' as a result of these delays, but that they will be 'in place' in the near future.

Scottish Futures Trust – Infrastructure Commentary

Based on the infrastructure data that informed SFT’s October progress report, local authorities are currently planning to deliver 882 infrastructure projects.

The table below illustrates the progress since January 2019 along with a breakdown of the number of Refurbishment, Extension and New Build projects reported to SFT as being either ‘Complete’, ‘In Construction’ or ‘In Development’.

Project Status	January 2019	June 2019	September 2019	December 2019
Complete	70	119	214	273
In Construction	28	44	120	162
In Development	679	738	566	447
Total	777	901	900	882

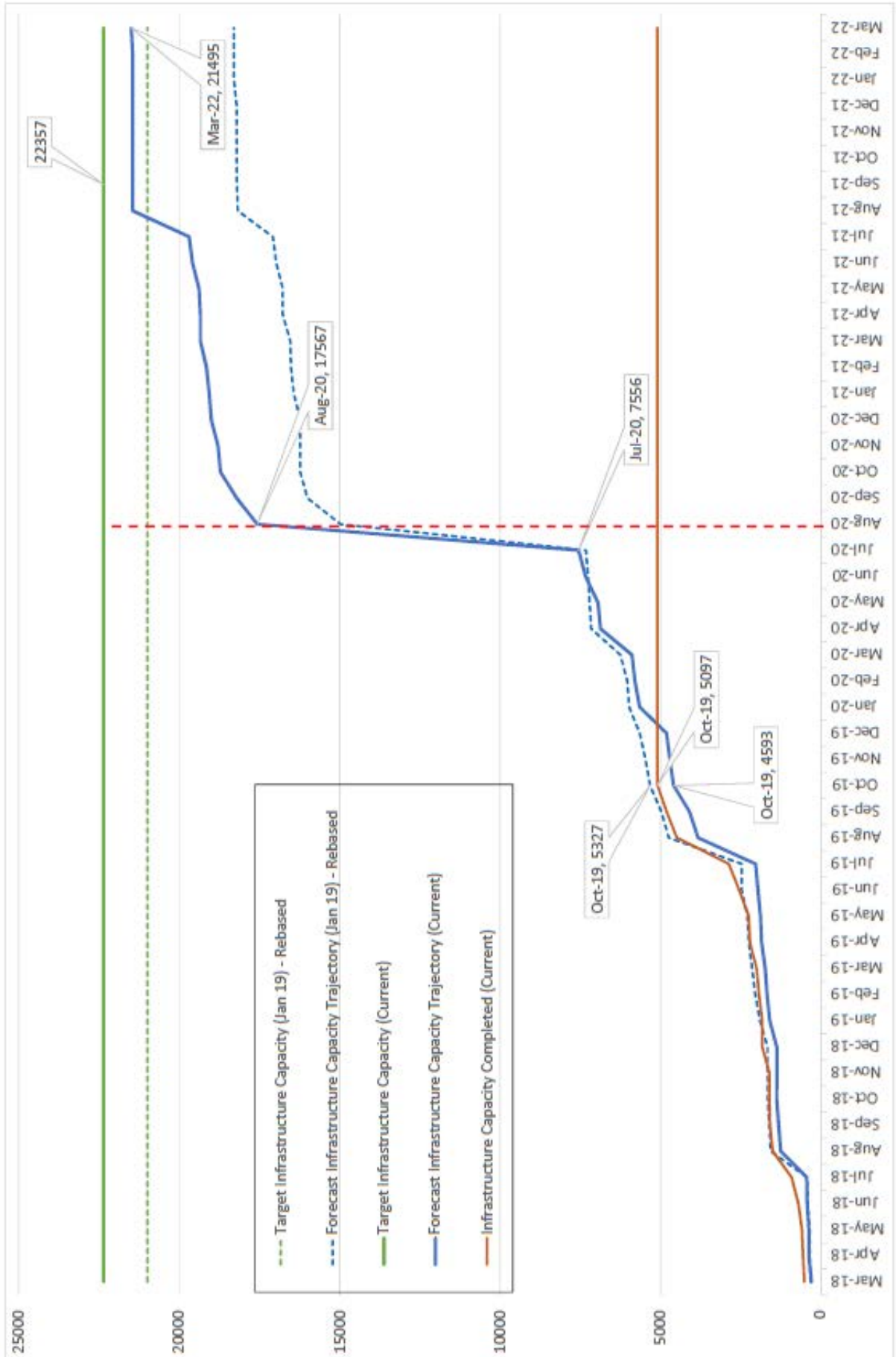
Local authorities have continued to refine their capital programmes in response to ongoing assessments of demand, availability of capacity within partners and the implementation of new operating models. Compared to June 2019, this quarter has seen a net reduction of 15 refurbishment projects, 9 extension projects and 3 outdoor projects and 3 outdoor projects off-set by a net increase of 7 new build projects and 1 “other” type project.

The current programme also includes 35 outdoor projects, of which four are complete, one is in construction and 30 are in development.

Based on the data returns for SFT’s October quarterly infrastructure progress report, 31% of the planned number of capital projects and 23% of the total planned additional infrastructure capacity was reported as being complete. Of the additional planned capacity targeted to be available from August 2020, 29% is now complete. This is behind the baseline delivery profile of January 2019. However, the additional infrastructure capacity that is being reported as “complete” is within 5% of that forecast to be “open” in the January baseline figures.

The current forecast trajectory of additional infrastructure capacity becoming available as compared to the baseline of January 2019 is illustrated in the graph below.

Figure 6: ELC Expansion Programme – Forecast Infrastructure Trajectory



ELC Infrastructure - Key Messages



1. The start of the academic year saw a significant increase in the number of completed capital projects which was in line with expectations.
2. The delivery profile remains very back ended with approximately 50% of the total planned additional capacity currently programmed to become available in July and August 2020.
3. Approximately 570 new or amended local authority registrations are currently forecast to be required for August 2020 with around 350 requiring approval in August 2020.
4. Around 17,500 additional spaces are currently planned for August 2020. Local authorities continue to review forecast demand in response to their admission and partner commissioning processes and tailor their contingency and transitional plans accordingly.
5. Around a further 4,500 additional places will be delivered after August 2020. These, in part, will substitute for the additional capacity provided for via contingency or transitional arrangements but will also provide additional flexibility and choice for parents.

Conclusions and Next Steps

The data collected indicates that the implementation of the expansion at the national level is broadly in line with forecasts provided by councils earlier in September 2019.

As predicted by the forecasts, there has been little increase in the expansion between August 2019 (“One Year To Go”) and September 2019. This is expected over such a short time period within term time.

Returns continue to show variability at the local level, however the scale of variability is reduced compared to previous reporting periods, and is within expected ranges.

A significant proportion of the expansion is still forecast to take place between April and September 2020.

It is noteworthy that despite the workforce indicator being behind the forecast position for September 2019, capacity in local authority settings is ahead of the forecast position, as is uptake amongst 3- to 5-year-olds. This indicates that this shortfall to forecast position is not impacting the ability of families to access phased expanded provision at this stage of the expansion.

Data on the progress of the delivery of the ELC expansion will continue to be collected bi-annually by the IS, with reports published tracking the progress towards the delivery of 1140 hours funded ELC. The next data collection is scheduled for June 2020 to report on expansion up to the end of April 2020.

This will be complemented by SFT’s quarterly tracking of progress on ELC infrastructure delivery. The next ELC Infrastructure data collection is scheduled for January 2020.

The data collection will be subject to ongoing refinement with an understanding that a balance needs to be maintained between improvement and continuity and the ability to conduct an analysis across periods to show how the expansion is progressing.

The data collected now and going forward will inform discussions at the Joint Delivery Board for the Expansion of Early Learning and Childcare Programme and provide evidence to support decision making at a Programme level.

Appendix 1 – The Indicators

Topic	Indicator	Definition	Source
Workforce	Additional local authority (FTE) staff in place	Local authorities were asked to provide the forecast and actual figures for the total number of additional full-time equivalent (FTE) local authority staff required to deliver more than 600 hours of funded ELC. It should be noted that local authorities were given the freedom to define FTE according to their own classification, and that this varied across authorities.	Provided to IS by each local authority.
Capacity	Total capacity for 1140 hours in local authority settings (no of children) (i.e. based on service delivery model)	Local authorities were asked to provide the forecast and actuals for the expected total capacity for 1140 hours funded ELC on a typical week in local authority settings. ‘Capacity’ is the total number of children that can be accommodated based on the service model used. As such, this figure may be different to the Care Inspectorate registered space depending on the service model deployed.	Provided to IS by each local authority.
2-year-old uptake	Number of 2-year-olds receiving more than 600 hours funded ELC in local authority settings, partner provider settings and childminders	Local authorities were asked to provide the total number of 2-year-olds forecast to receive and actually receiving more than 600 hours funded ELC. This includes all eligible 2s and 2s ‘in need’. Authorities were asked to provide figures for local authority settings, partner provider settings and childminder settings.	Provided to IS by each local authority.

Topic	Indicator	Definition	Source
3 to 5-year-old uptake	Number of 3, 4 and 5-year-olds receiving more than 600 hours funded ELC in local authority settings, partner provider settings and childminders	Local authorities were asked to provide the total number of 3 to 5-year-olds forecast to receive and actually receiving more than 600 hours funded ELC. Authorities were asked to provide figures for local authority settings, partner provider settings and childminder settings.	Provided to IS by each local authority.
Infrastructure	Number of capital projects completed, in construction and being developed by local authorities.	Local authorities were asked to provide the total number of capital projects completed, in construction and in development within their local authority.	Provided to SFT by each local authority.



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