



# Early Learning and Childcare Expansion Delivery Progress Report

February 2022



Scottish Government  
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## Key Messages



- This data collection provides an update on the status of ELC delivery in January 2022.
- Data returned by local authorities indicates that 111,574 children were accessing funded ELC as of the end of January 2022.
- Of these, 97% were accessing more than 600 hours, and 88% were accessing the full 1140 hours funded ELC.
- Every council reported an increase between 6% and 26% in numbers of 2-5-year-olds accessing funded ELC compared to August 2021.
- There has been an increase of 16% in the numbers of eligible 2s accessing funded ELC, rising from 5,966 children in August 2021 to 6,913 in January 2022.
- There has been an increase in the local authority ELC workforce of 549 FTE rising from 17,515 FTE in August 2021 to 18,064 FTE in January 2022.
- Further workforce increases are expected, with a further 593 FTE expected to be in place in April 2022.
- Funded providers in the private and voluntary sectors and childminders provide 31% of all funded provision.
- As of February 2022, there were 913 projects in the capital programme, 85% of which are now complete.

# Background and Context

The duty on local authorities to secure 1140 hours funded ELC for all eligible children has been in effect since 1st August 2021.

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. Data gathering is planned for the beginning of each academic term through to April 2022.

The objective of this data collection is to understand the status of the ELC sector across the country regarding uptake, workforce and capacity as of the last week in January 2022.

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 implementation of the 1140 hours expansion 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.

This report aims to summarise the status of the sector at the end of January 2022 as reported by local authorities, comparing this to their reported position from the previous academic year.

# Objectives, Methodology and Assumptions

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.

Each collection requests the status of delivery in a reference week. For this collection, the reference week was that commencing on 24th January 2022.

One council was unable to provide a data return due to operational pressures taking the team capacity. For this report, the forecast figures have been used in place of actuals for uptake and August 2021 figures have been used in place of actuals for workforce.

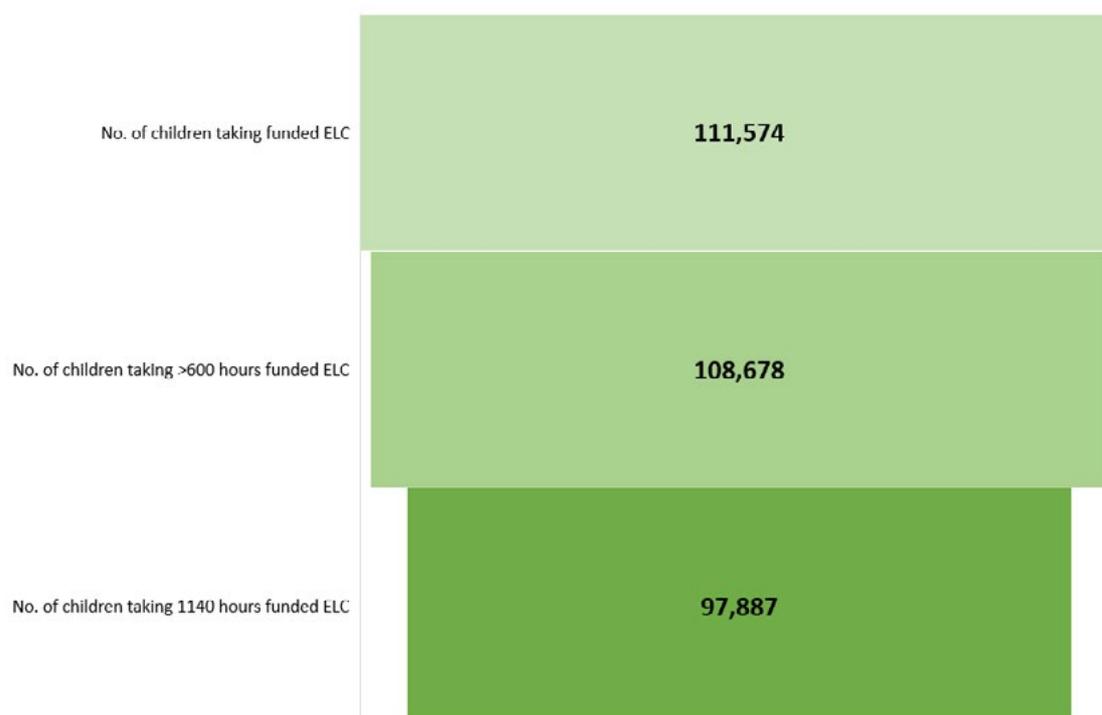
Scottish Futures Trust collect ELC infrastructure data on a quarterly basis from local authorities. An extract of the executive summary from Scottish Futures Trust's Infrastructure Progress Report is included here.

Although the Improvement Service and Scottish Futures Trust 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 Improvement Service or Scottish Futures Trust.

# Data Analysis

## Uptake

Total uptake (2- to 5-year-old)



**Figure 1: Number of children (2-5-years-old) accessing levels of funded ELC**

The number of children reported to be receiving funded ELC in January 2022 was 111,574. Of these, 97% (108,678 children) were reported to be accessing more than 600 funded hours, and 88% (97,887 children) were reported to be accessing 1140 funded hours (Figure 1).

The number of children accessing funded ELC has increased by 23% from August 2021 (90,890 children). This has resulted in every local authority recording an increase in uptake varying from around 6% to around 26%. This is to be expected as more children become eligible throughout the academic year.

Comparing this uptake to that seen in February 2021,<sup>1</sup> at a national level, the numbers of 2- to 5-year-old children reported to be accessing funded ELC have slightly decreased by 2% (114,222 children).

While the number of children accessing funded ELC have increased since August 2021, the

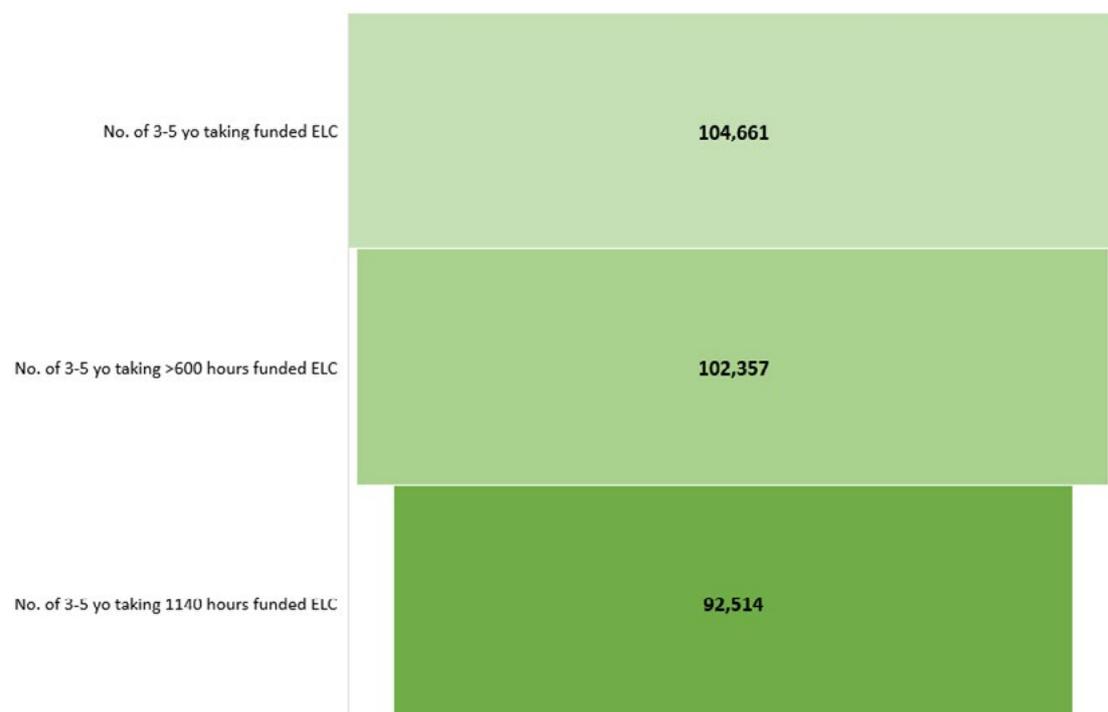
<sup>1</sup> Nurseries were closed in January 2021 due to Covid lockdown. The comparison point is therefore against February 2021, when nurseries re-opened.

proportion of children accessing more than 600 hours (97% in August 2021) and accessing 1140 hours (87% in August 2021) has stayed the same.

It should be noted that this measurement reflects the number of children accessing various levels of provision, which does not directly reflect the hours that are available. In early August 2021, all local authorities confirmed by correspondence that they were able to offer a place to all eligible children who applied for funded ELC up to 1140 hours. 100% uptake of the full 1140 hours was not expected at any point through the expansion.

As in all previous delivery progress reports there is variability between local authorities. Some local authorities report that all children in receipt of funded ELC are accessing 1140 hours, while others report lower uptake of the full offer.

### 3- to 5-year-old uptake of funded ELC



**Figure 2: Number of children (3-5-years-old) accessing levels of funded ELC**

The number of 3 to 5-year-olds reported to be receiving funded ELC in January 2022 was 104,661 children. Of these, 98% (102,357 children) were reported to be accessing more than 600 funded hours, and 88% (92,514 children) were reported to be accessing 1140 funded hours (Figure 2).

The number of 3-5-year-old children accessing funded ELC has increased by 23% compared to August 2021 (84,936 children). This is to be expected as more children become eligible throughout the academic year.

Variability continues to be seen at a local level, with some local authorities noting uptake of the expanded hours in a greater proportion of their 3- to 5-year-old children in funded ELC than others.

### 2-year-old uptake of funded ELC



**Figure 3: Number of children (2-year-olds) accessing levels of funded ELC**

The number of 2-year-olds reported to be receiving funded ELC in January 2022 was 6,913 children. Of these, 91% (6,321 children) were reported to be accessing more than 600 funded hours, and 78% (5,373 children) were reported to be accessing 1140 funded hours (Figure 3).

There has been an increase in the number of 2-year-old children accessing funded ELC by 16% compared to August 2021 (5,966 children). This is to be expected as more children become eligible throughout the academic year.

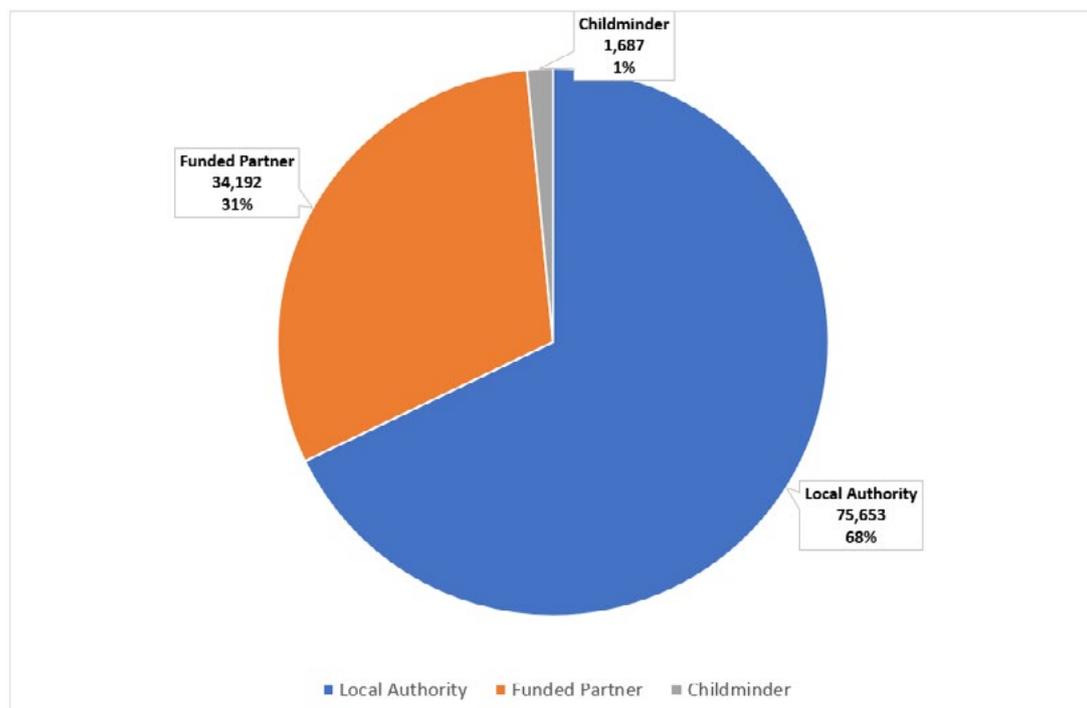
It can be noted that the proportions of children accessing expanded hours (both categories of over 600 and the full 1140) are lower for the 2-year-old population than they are for the 3-5-year-old population. However, the proportion of 2-year-old children accessing 1140 hours funded hours have increased by 6% compared to August 2021, when 72% of 2-year-olds were reported to be accessing 1140 hours.

Variability continues to be seen at a local level, with some local authorities noting uptake of the expanded hours in a greater proportion of their 2-year-old children in funded ELC than others.

## Provision in Local Authority, Private Partner and Childminder Settings

The graph below shows the reported proportion of uptake split by provider types in January 2022.

To ensure that the data collection is not too burdensome, local authorities report on how many children access most of their provision in each setting type (rather than the number of hours being accessed in each type). Consequently, the statistics quoted do not account for blended models.



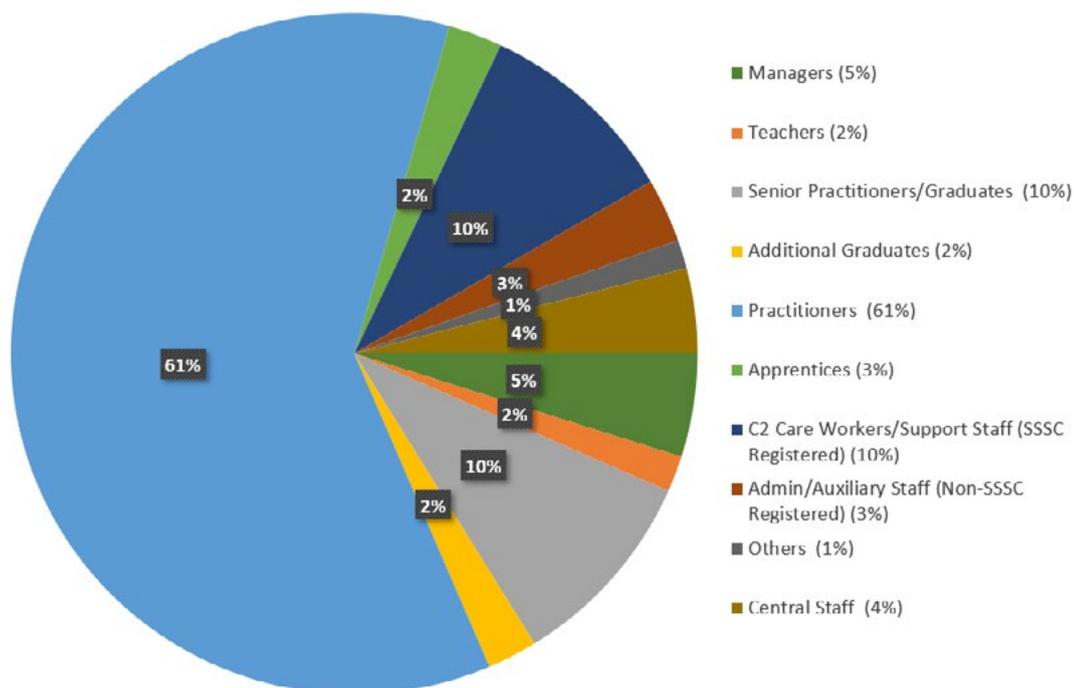
**Figure 4: Uptake of funded ELC split by provider type**

Figure 4 shows that for January 2022, 31% of provision was being accessed in private settings, compared to 68% in local authority settings, with the remainder being accessed with childminders. The proportion of children accessing different provision has stayed the same compared to August 2021.

Of all children who are accessing the majority of their hours with funded providers, 85% are accessing 1140 hours, compared with 90% in local authority settings.

Local authorities reported that, as of January 2022, 1,235 childminders were in partnership to deliver funded hours. There has been minor difference in the number of childminders in January 2022 compared to August 2021. 1,907 children were reported to be accessing some level of provision with childminders, an increase of 191 since August 2021.

## Local Authority ELC Workforce

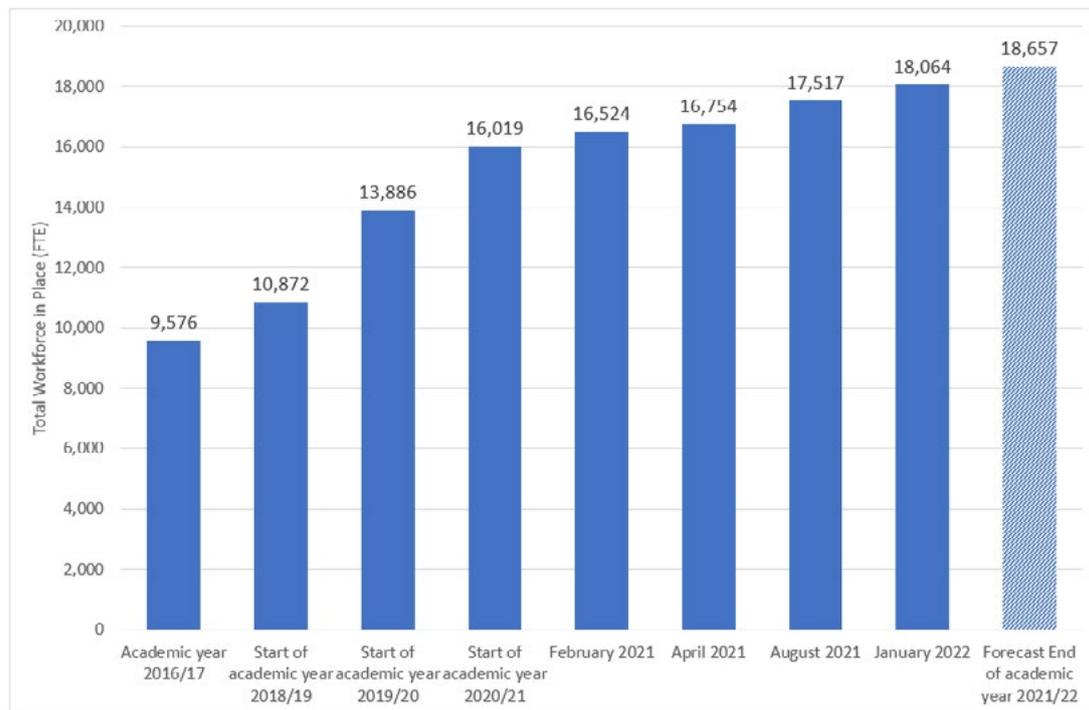


**Figure 5: Local authority ELC workforce split by job type**

Local authorities reported that as of January 2022 the ELC workforce in local authorities comprised of 18,064 FTE across Scotland. Figure 5 shows the split of job types in ELC nationally as of January 2022. By far the largest section of the ELC workforce are Practitioners, comprising of 11,004 FTE (61%).

When compared to the total local authority ELC workforce in academic year 2016/17, there has been an increase of 8,488 FTE. This is an increase of 89% from 9,576 FTE in academic year 2016/17.

Since August 2021, there has been an increase of 549 FTE. By far the biggest increase since August 2021 has been seen amongst the practitioners (+407 FTE). C2 care workers/Support Staff (SSSC Registered) accounts for the second highest increase since August 2021 (+75 FTE).



**Figure 6: Total local authority workforce (FTE) in place since beginning of expansion**

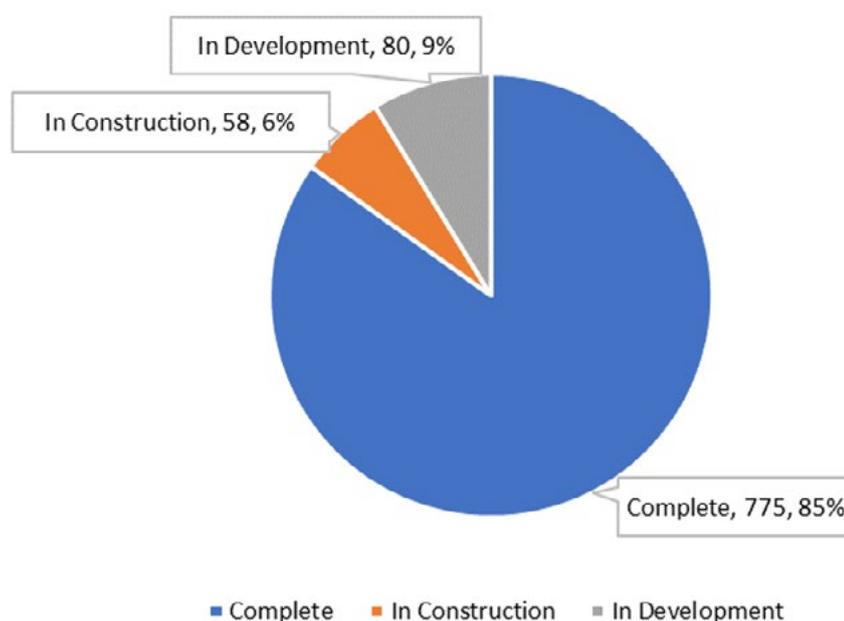
Figure 6 show the profile of the workforce expansion over time since beginning of expansion activities in academic year 2016/17.

While local authorities note that they have the staff in place to deliver the requisite capacity in August 2021, most local authorities are expecting to continue to take additional staff over the course of this academic year and future academic years in order to, for example deal with increased uptake, staff turnover or absence cover. Local authorities report that they expect an additional 593 FTE to be in place by the end of the academic year.

As on other indicators, there is variability at a local level, with some authorities noting that their recruitment is complete and others indicating that recruitment continues. On average, each local authority expects to increase their workforce by 18 FTE between January 2022 and April 2022.

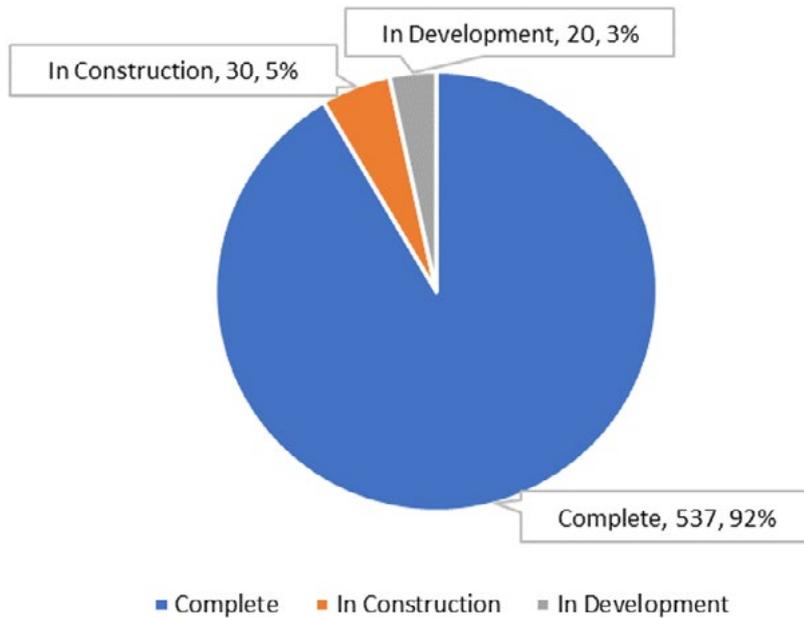
# Scottish Futures Trust – Infrastructure Commentary

As of February 2022, there were 913 projects in the capital programme which will deliver c.22,000 additional spaces. 85% of all capital projects are now complete, delivering 77% of the total planned additional space. Figure 7 illustrates the status of the overall capital programme as of February 2022.



## Figure 7: Total Number of Projects

Not all capital projects were required to deliver 1140 hours from August. 587 of the 913 capital projects were identified by local authorities as being required for August; the remaining projects being linked to increased flexibility, forecast growth and longer-term learning estate development projects. Figure 8 illustrates the status of the projects that were required for August.



**Figure 8: Number of Projects Required for August 2021**

Based on local authorities' infrastructure updates in February 2022, of the 587 projects required for August, 537 projects are now complete (92%) and robust contingency plans or transitional arrangements have been put in place for the remaining projects to ensure continued service delivery.

SFT will continue to monitor progress and work with local authorities to support the remaining projects on the programme.

# Conclusions

Local authorities successfully delivered the expansion of funded ELC in August 2021 to secure 1140 hours funded ELC for all eligible children.

Across the key indicator measurements and incorporating returned narrative, the national picture shows continued high uptake of the expanded offer, and success in resourcing the requisite capacity and workforce to support this.

As in previous delivery progress reports, there is variability at a local level with some local authorities reporting higher uptake of the expanded funded hours than others.

Data returned by local authorities indicates that 111,574 children were accessing funded ELC as of the end of January 2021, with 108,678 children (97%) accessing more than 600 hours, and 97,887 children (88%) accessing 1140 hours funded ELC.

Comparing this uptake to that seen in August 2021, at a national level, the number of 2-to-5 children accessing funded ELC has increased by 23%. Every council reported an increase in uptake in January 2022 compared to August 2021. This is to be expected as more children become eligible throughout the academic year.

The local authority ELC workforce is reported to have increased by 8,488 FTE since academic year 2016/17, including an increase of 547 FTE since August 2021.

As of February 2022, there were 913 projects in the capital programme, 85% of which are now complete. Of the capital projects required to support the delivery of 1140 from August, 92% are complete and robust contingency plans or transitional arrangements have been put in place for the remaining projects to ensure continued service delivery.

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