



# Early Learning and Childcare Expansion Delivery Progress Report

September 2020



Scottish Government  
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## Key Messages



- Following the suspension of the statutory duty on local authorities to provide 1140 hours of ELC in response to COVID-19, this data collection aims to provide a point-in-time view of the ELC sector as it reopens in August 2020
- Data returned by local authorities indicates that 93,438 children were accessing funded ELC as of the end of August 2020
- Of these, 74,870 children (80%) were accessing more than the statutory entitlement of 600 hours, and 56,697 children (61%) were accessing 1140 hours funded ELC
- The local authority ELC workforce is reported to have increased by 6,575 FTE since academic year 2016/17
- Delivery of the expansion in these key indicators has surpassed the pre-COVID forecasted position for April 2020 but has not reached the pre-COVID forecasted position for September 2020
- Funded providers and childminders provide 28% of all funded provision, but 34% of all 1140 provision. 74% of children who access most of their hours with funded providers are accessing 1140 hours
- Following construction delays due to COVID-19, capital programmes are being reviewed and re-prioritised to support delivery of the 1140 expansion
- Variability at the local level remains a key feature of the progress of expansion and is also seen amongst levels of funded provision offered upon reopening
- In returned narrative, local authorities note that the offer of 1140 can be extended to more children throughout the academic year as recruitment and infrastructure programmes become further advanced, both of which have been impacted by restrictions associated with COVID-19.

## Background and Context

In response to COVID-19, the Scottish Government suspended the statutory duty on local authorities to provide 1140 hours of ELC from August 2020. However, the Scottish Government and Local Government remain firmly committed to the rollout of the 1140 hours expansion and wish to see this delivered as soon as is practicable.

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.

This report aims to summarise the status of the sector at the end of August 2020 as reported by local authorities and, where appropriate, compares this to historic (pre-COVID) forecasts for expansion.

# Revised Data Collection Framework

Previous periodic data collections reported to the Joint Delivery Board gathered information on the additionality that was being delivered to support the 1140 expansion. All measurements were relative to a 'baseline' position in academic year 2016/17, before expansion activities began.

In recognition of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the ELC sector, the Joint Delivery Board at their meeting in July 2020 supported a recommendation by the IS to undertake a re-baselining of the data being collected.

The Joint Delivery Board also recognised that local authorities should be given time to consider how the pandemic might necessitate revisions to their plans for the 1140 expansion. As such, this data collection and the following report aim to provide a point-in-time view of the sector at its reopening in August 2020 and does not include updated forecasts for delivery of 1140.

A revised data collection framework was built which allows measurement of the status of the ELC sector at its baseline position at the start of the academic year, throughout recovery and expansion to 1140. Detail on the revised framework can be found in Appendix 1.

# Objectives, Approach, Methodology and Assumptions

The key objective of this data collection is to understand the status of the ELC sector across the country with regard to uptake, workforce and capacity as of August 2020, at the beginning of the academic year 2020/21. It is intended that collecting and reporting on this information will provide the evidence base with which the Joint Delivery Board can take decisions on an appropriate timeline for re-introduction of the statutory date for 1140 expansion.

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.

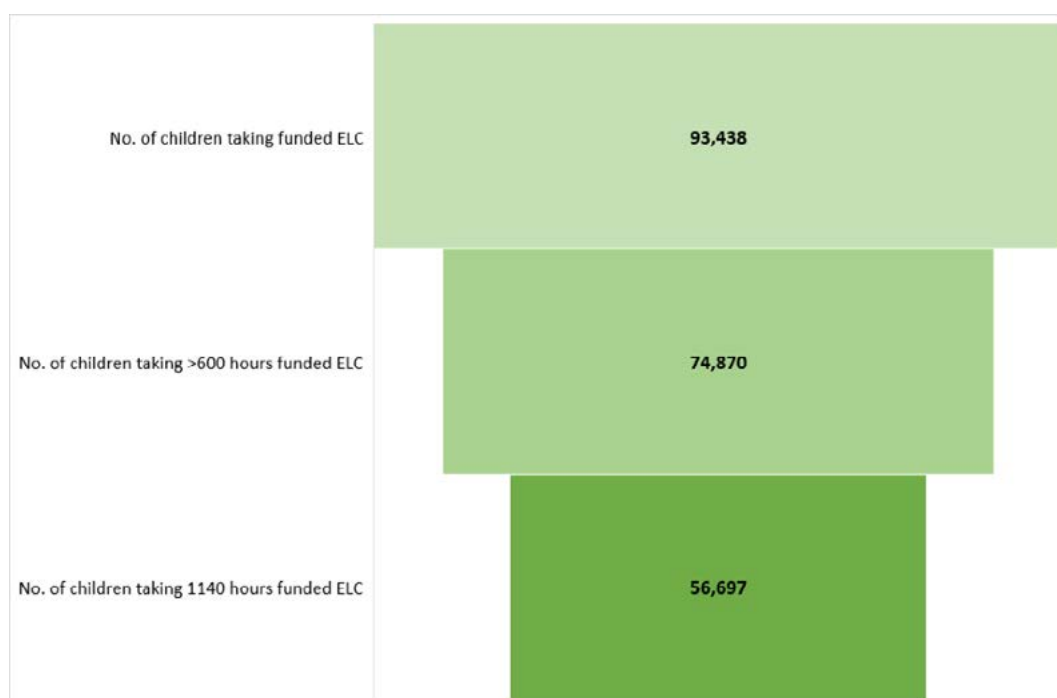
Scottish Futures Trust collect ELC infrastructure data on a quarterly basis from local authorities. An [extract of the executive summary](#) from Scottish Futures Trust's Infrastructure Progress Report is included in this document.

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

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

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

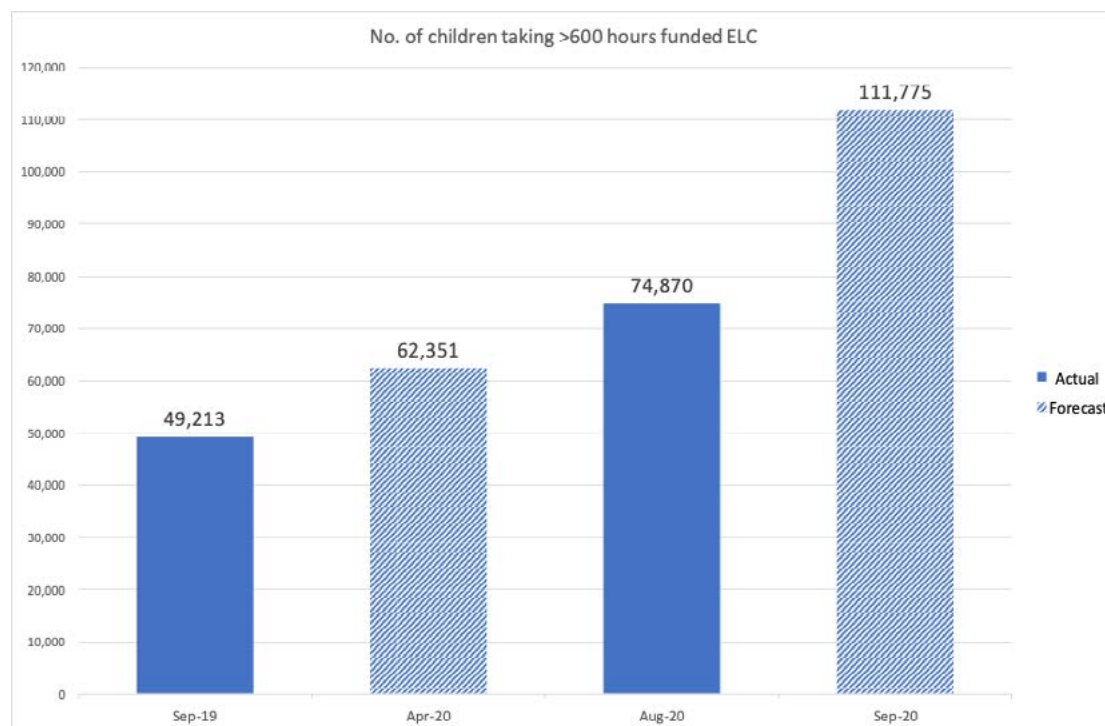


The number of children reported to be receiving funded ELC in August 2020 was 93,438 children. Of these, 80% (74,870 children) were reported to be accessing more than the statutory 600 funded hours, and 61% (56,697 children) were reported to be accessing 1140 funded hours (Figure 1).

In narrative collected as part of this data collection, many local authorities indicated that since the data collection point was at the end of August, which was very early in the academic year, children were still transitioning to nursery as part of a settling in period. Local authorities anticipated that uptake figures would increase through September. It is therefore likely that the ELC census taking place in September 2020 will show different uptake figures from those collected in this data return.

It should be noted that this measurement reflects the number of children accessing different levels of provision, which may not reflect the hours that are offered – e.g. a child could be offered 1140 hours but may only choose to access 900 hours.

**Figure 2: Number of children (2-5-years-old) accessing expanded hours (>600), compared to previous measurements and forecasts**



This information can be compared to that collected last year under the previous delivery progress reporting framework (Figure 2). Local authorities reported that as of September 2019, 49,213 children were accessing more than 600 hours funded ELC. The uptake of expanded hours seen in August 2020 far outstrips this figure at 74,870, despite the removal of the statutory duty to expand.

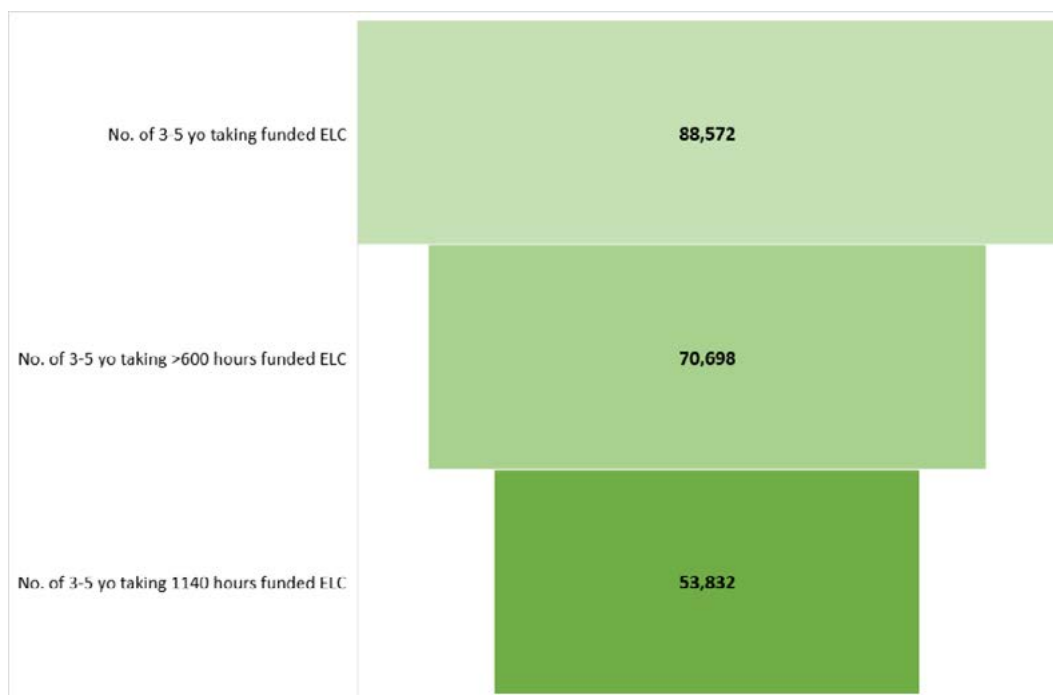
According to forecasts returned by local authorities in September 2019, 111,775 children were expected to be accessing more than 600 hours in September 2020 after the statutory duty was introduced. This shows that the expansion has not yet been delivered in full nationally, though despite the COVID-19 pandemic, 67% of the children expected to access expanded hours at this point in time are doing so.

As in all previous delivery progress reports there is seen to be variability between local authorities. All local authorities report that some children are accessing expanded hours. Some report that all children in receipt of funded ELC are accessing expanded hours, while others report that most children are accessing the current statutory entitlement of 600 hours, with only a minority accessing expanded hours.



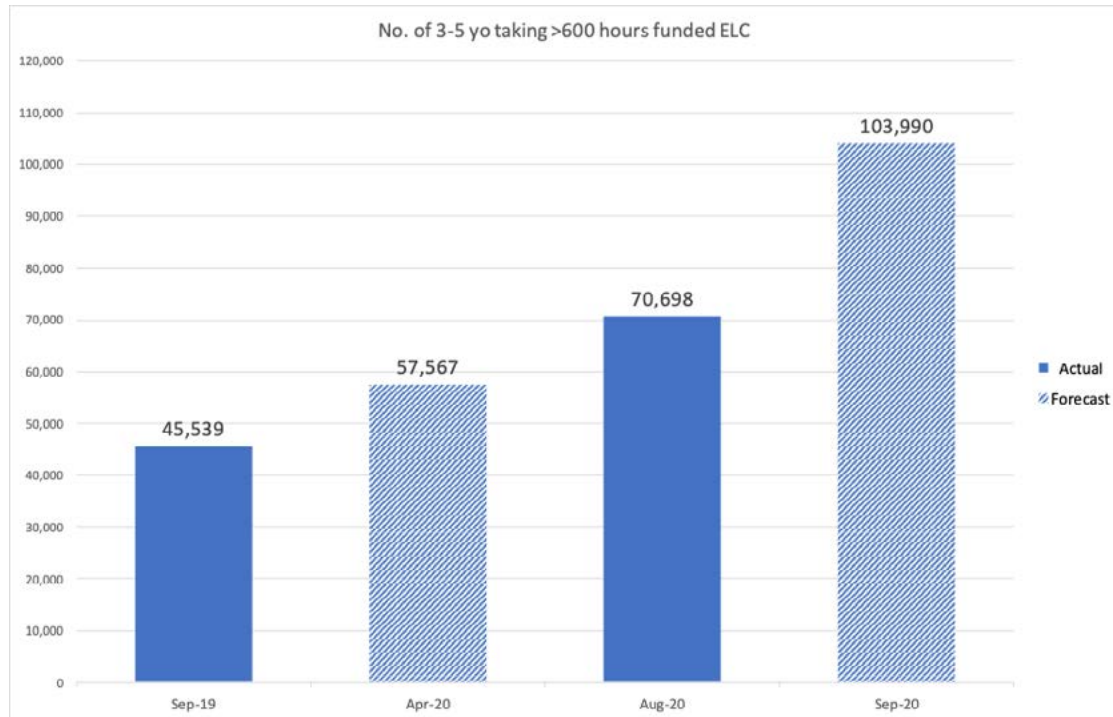
### 3- to 5-year-old uptake of funded ELC

Figure 3: 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 August 2020 was 88,572 children. Of these, 80% (70,698 children) were reported to be accessing more than the statutory 600 funded hours, and 61% (53,832 children) were reported to be accessing 1140 funded hours (Figure 3).

**Figure 4: Number of children (3-5-years-old) accessing expanded hours (>600), compared to previous measurements and forecasts**



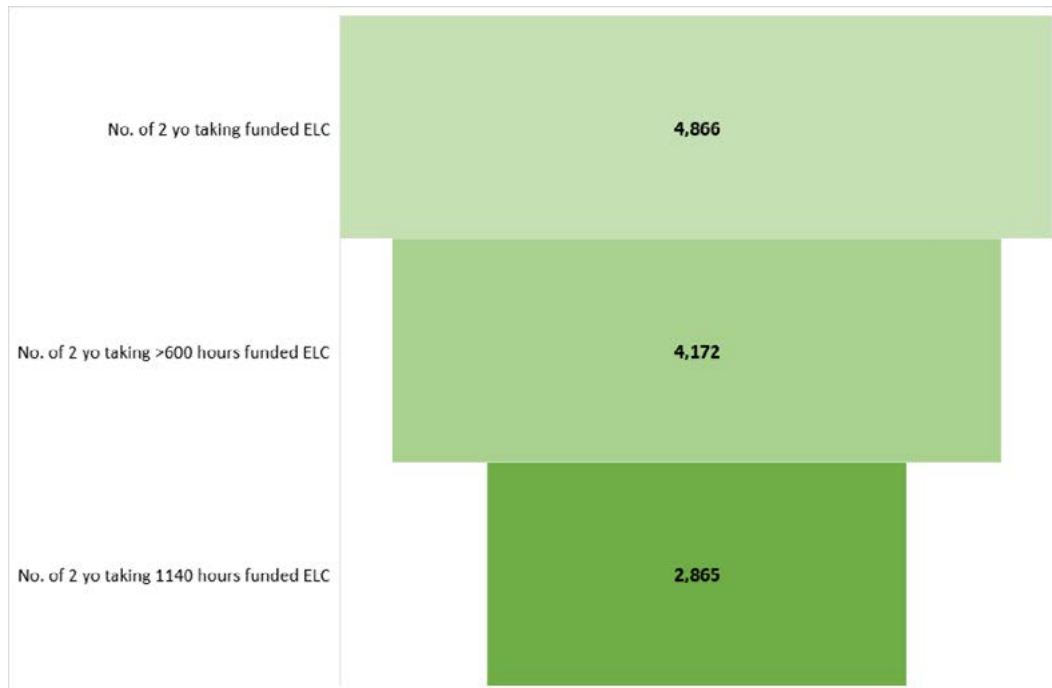
Comparing this to previously collected data, as of September 2019, local authorities reported that 45,539 3- to 5-year-old children were accessing more than 600 hours funded ELC (Figure 4). In pre-COVID forecasts, local authorities indicated that in April 2020, 57,567 3- to 5-year-old children would be accessing more than 600 hours funded ELC. The uptake of expanded hours seen in August 2020 outstrips both these figures at 70,698, with a significant increase of the expanded hours having taken place over the summer, despite the COVID-19 pandemic.

103,990 3- to 5-year-old children were expected to be accessing more than 600 hours in September 2020. This shows that the expansion has not yet been delivered nationally, though despite the COVID-19 pandemic, 68% of the children expected access expanded hours at this point in time are doing so.

Variability continues to be seen at a local level, with some local authorities delivering expanded hours to a greater proportion of their children in funded ELC than others.

## 2-year-old uptake of funded ELC

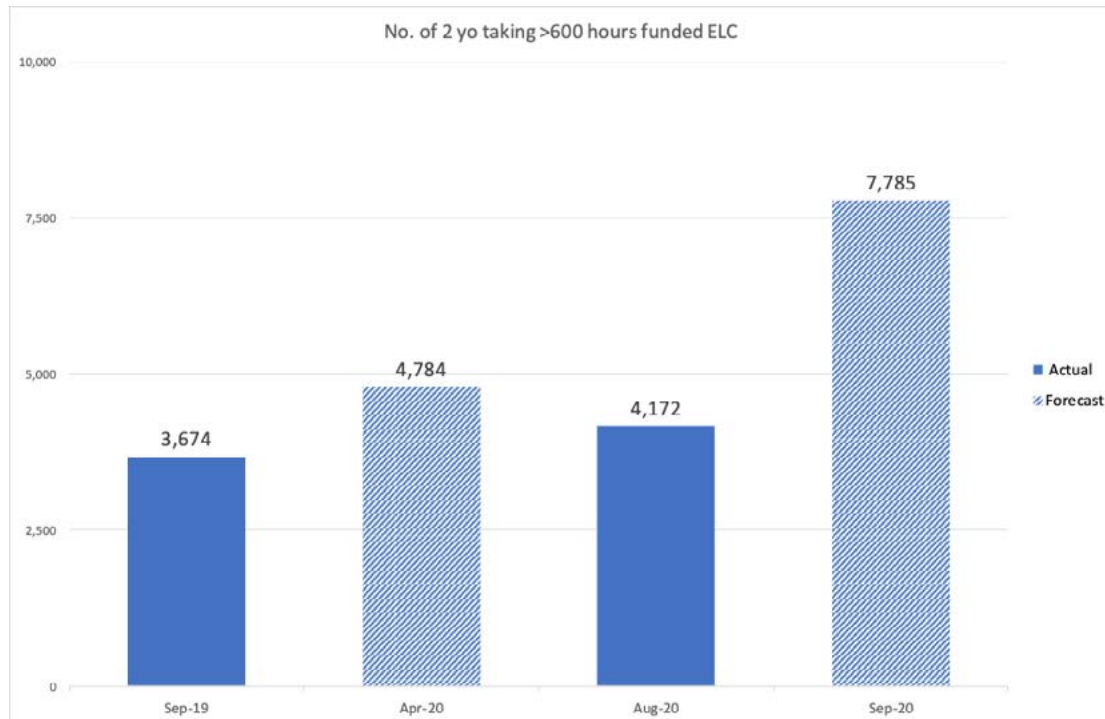
Figure 5: Number of children (2-year-olds) accessing levels of funded ELC



The number of 2-year-olds reported to be receiving funded ELC in August 2020 was 4,866 children. Of these, 86% (4,172 children) were reported to be accessing more than the statutory 600 funded hours, and 59% (2,865 children) were reported to be accessing 1140 funded hours (Figure 5).

It is noteworthy that of those 2-year-olds in receipt of funded ELC, a higher proportion are accessing expanded hours than amongst 3- to 5-year olds.

**Figure 6: Number of children (2-year-olds) accessing expanded hours (>600), compared to previous measurements and forecasts**



Comparing this to previously collected data, as of September 2019, local authorities reported that 3,674 2-year-old children were accessing more than 600 hours funded ELC (Figure 6). The figure for August 2020 surpasses this at 4,172 but falls short of the pre-COVID forecasted figure for April 2020 (4,784). It should be noted that this measurement is taken at the beginning of the academic year and April is at the end; throughout each academic year more children become eligible as they turn 2.

7,785 2-year-old children were expected to be accessing more than 600 hours in September 2020. Proportionately, the 2-year-old uptake is further behind the anticipated position (at 54% of the pre-COVID forecast figure) than the uptake amongst 3- to 5-year-olds (68%).

Variability continues to be seen at a local level, with some local authorities delivering expanded hours to a greater proportion of their 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 August 2020.

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

There are 72 children nationally who access most of their funded hours through 'alternative arrangements' (as defined by those arrangements recorded in the Child's Plan in accordance with section 49 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.). These figures have not been included in statistics here for the sake of clarity.

**Figure 7: Uptake of funded ELC split by provider type**

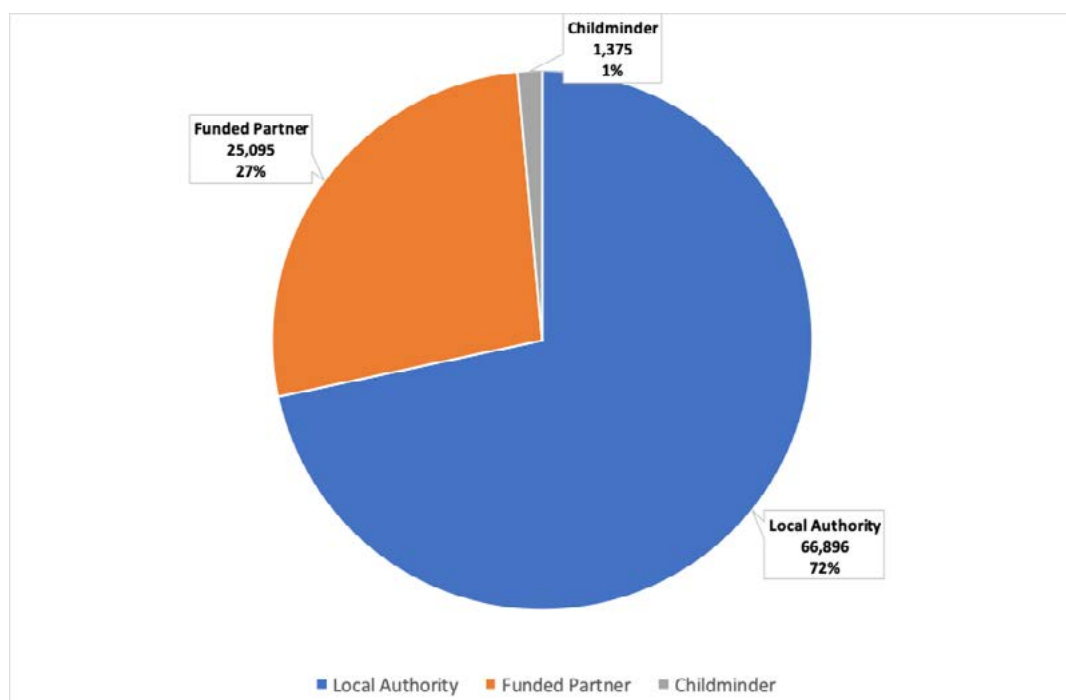


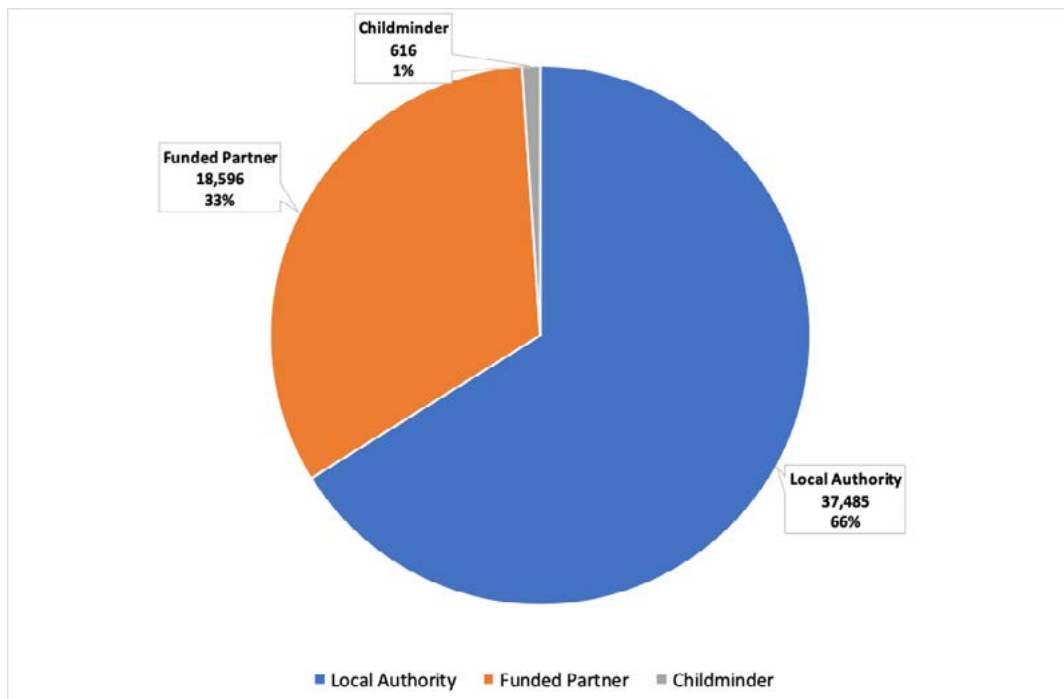
Figure 7 shows that for August 2020, nationally 27% of provision was being accessed in private settings, compared to 72% in local authority settings, with the remainder being accessed with childminders. This is in line with the split of provision that was forecast pre-COVID by local authorities for September 2020.

Narrative returned suggests that utilisation of funded providers for delivering an expanded offer is high. This is supported by the data returned; of those children accessing 1140 hours, 33% are accessing the majority of their hours with funded providers (Figure 8). This proportion

is significantly higher than the overall proportion of children accessing any level of provision with funded providers (27%, as detailed above).

Of all children who are accessing the majority of their hours with funded providers, 74% are accessing 1140 hours, compared with 56% in local authority settings.

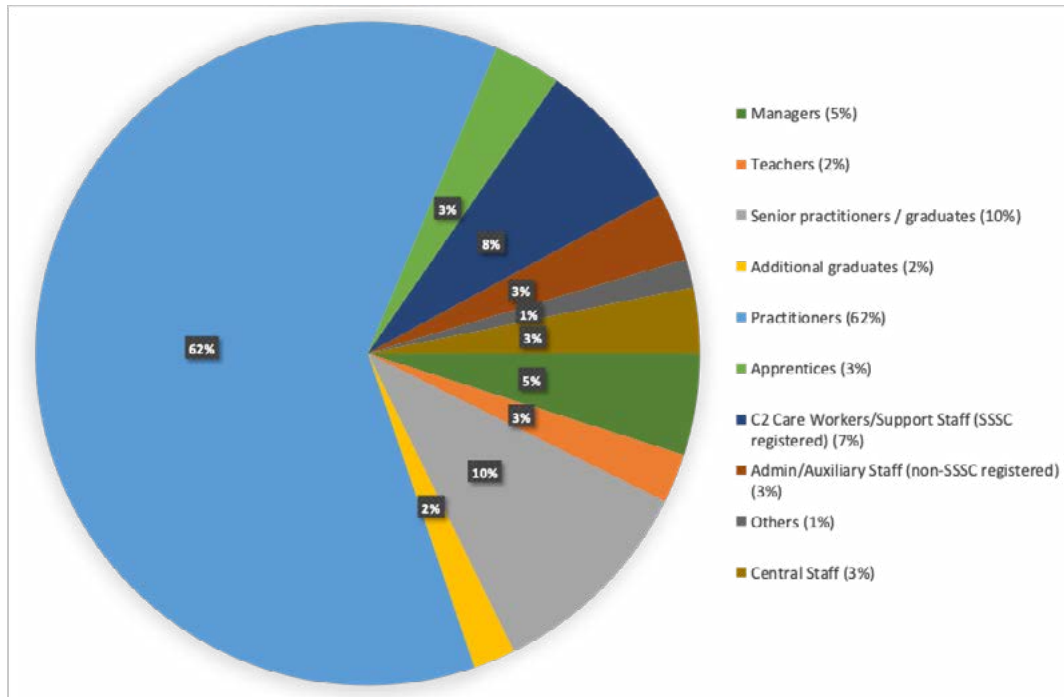
**Figure 8: Uptake of 1140 hours funded ELC split by provider type**



In this data collection, more information has been gathered on childminders. Local authorities reported that, as of August 2020, 1,174 childminders were in partnership to deliver funded hours, and 1,355 children were accessing some level of provision with childminders. Narrative returned indicates that provision accessed with childminders is most often used as part of a blended model.

## Local Authority ELC Workforce

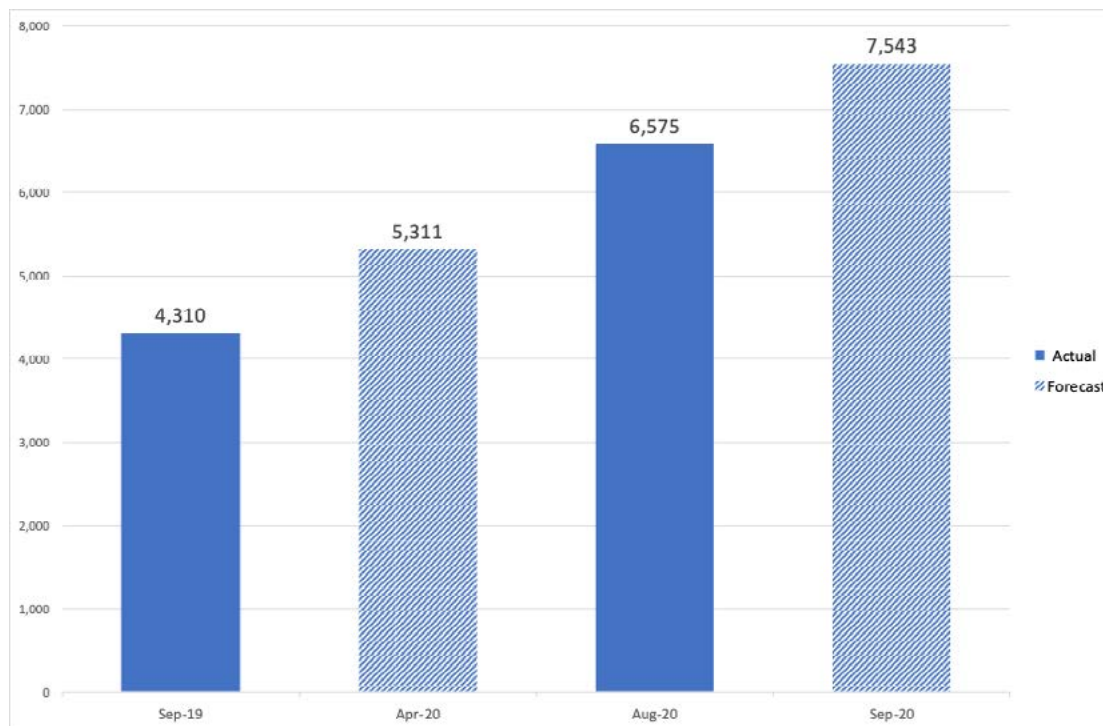
Figure 9: Local authority ELC workforce split by job type



Local authorities reported that as of August 2020 the ELC workforce in local authorities comprised of 15,990 FTE across Scotland. Figure 9 shows the split of job types in ELC nationally as of August 2020. By far the largest section of the ELC workforce are Practitioners, comprising of 9,845 FTE.

When compared to the total local authority ELC workforce in academic year 2016/17, there has been an increase of 6,575 FTE. This is an increase of 68.6% from 9,576 FTE in academic year 2016/17.

**Figure 10: Additional local authority workforce (FTE) in place, compared to previous measurements and forecasts**



Up to September 2019, local authorities reported that they had an additional 4,310 FTE staff in place to support delivery of the expansion (Figure 10). For April 2020, the number of additional FTE forecast to be in place was 5,311. It can therefore be seen that the additional workforce reported to be in place in August 2020 far outstrips both these figures at 6,575 FTE.

Pre-COVID, it was forecast that 7,543 additional FTE would be in place in September 2020. This indicates that the workforce expansion has not yet been completed nationally, though it is well advanced with 87% of the forecast FTE reported to be in place.

Local authorities noted in their free text narrative that recruitment has been continuing through lockdown via video conference interviews. A common theme in the narrative around the data collection was that while staff had been recruited, some were not in post at the time of reporting due to awaiting PVG checks. It is therefore anticipated that the number of staff in place will increase further through the early weeks of the new academic year. Some authorities note in their returns that the offer of 1140 can be extended to more children once recruitment is further advanced.

While returned data and narrative indicates that there is still recruitment outstanding, local authorities note that they are in the process of reviewing their total staffing needs for full delivery of the expansion.



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.

# Scottish Futures Trust – Infrastructure Commentary

## Progress Update

As of August 2020, there were 911 projects in the capital programme delivering c.22,000 additional spaces.

Just under 50% of the capital projects are now complete, delivering around 33% of the total planned number of additional spaces.

Recognising that some projects in the capital programme are not essential for the immediate provision of the expanded service, local authorities have been asked to identify which capital projects are required to deliver 1140.

Figure 11 and 12 below compares the status of the total ELC capital programme against those that are required for the expanded service.

The total number of projects required to deliver 1140 is currently being reviewed.

At a national level, local authority data returns suggest that around 17,000 additional spaces delivered via the capital programme are required to deliver 1140, the remaining spaces being linked to increased flexibility for forecast growth and long-term learning estate development projects.

Currently around 65% of the required additional spaces are forecast to be delivered by December 2020, increasing to 75% by April and 89% of all required additional capacity is forecast to be delivered by August 2021. The cumulative capacity expected to come online assuming no further public health restrictions are in place are as shown in Figure 13.

Figure 11: Total number of projects

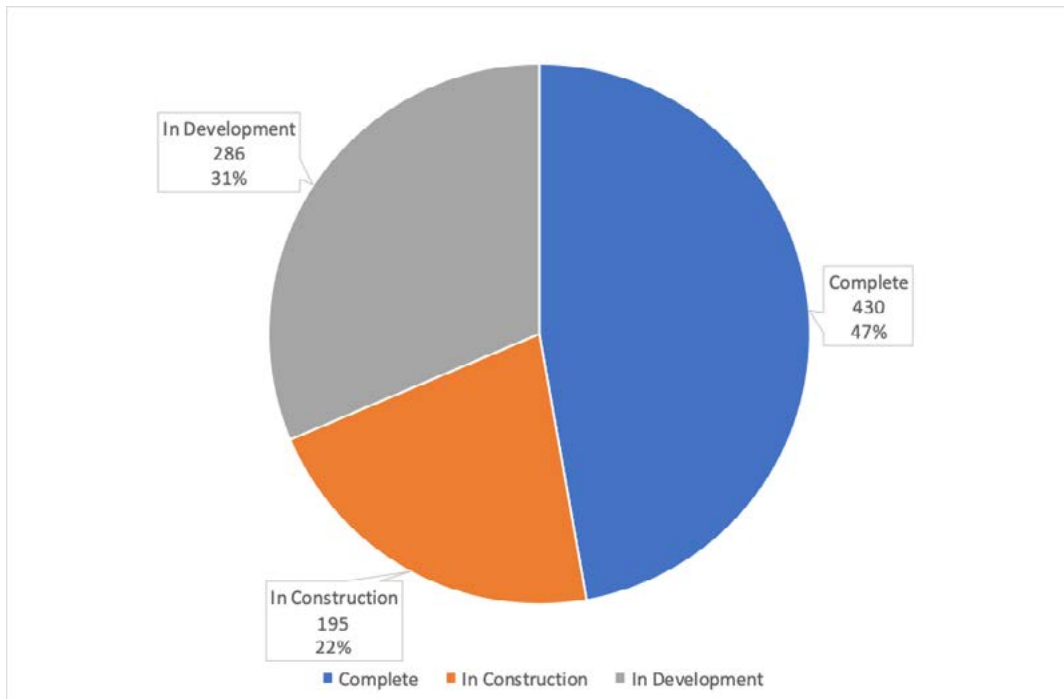


Figure 12: Number of projects reported to be required for delivery of 1140

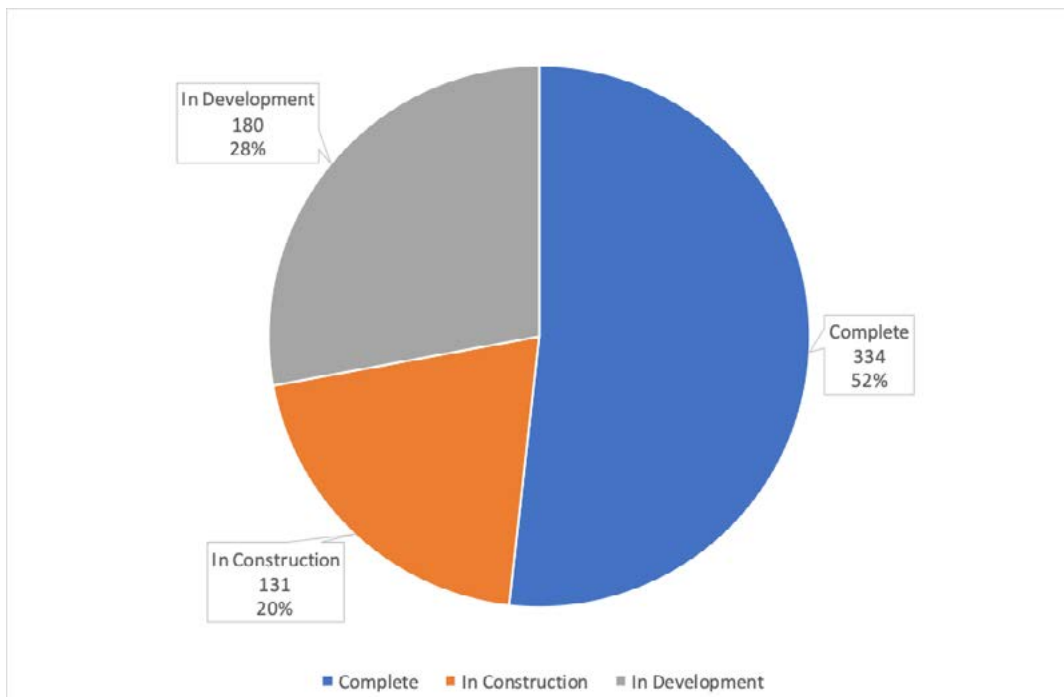
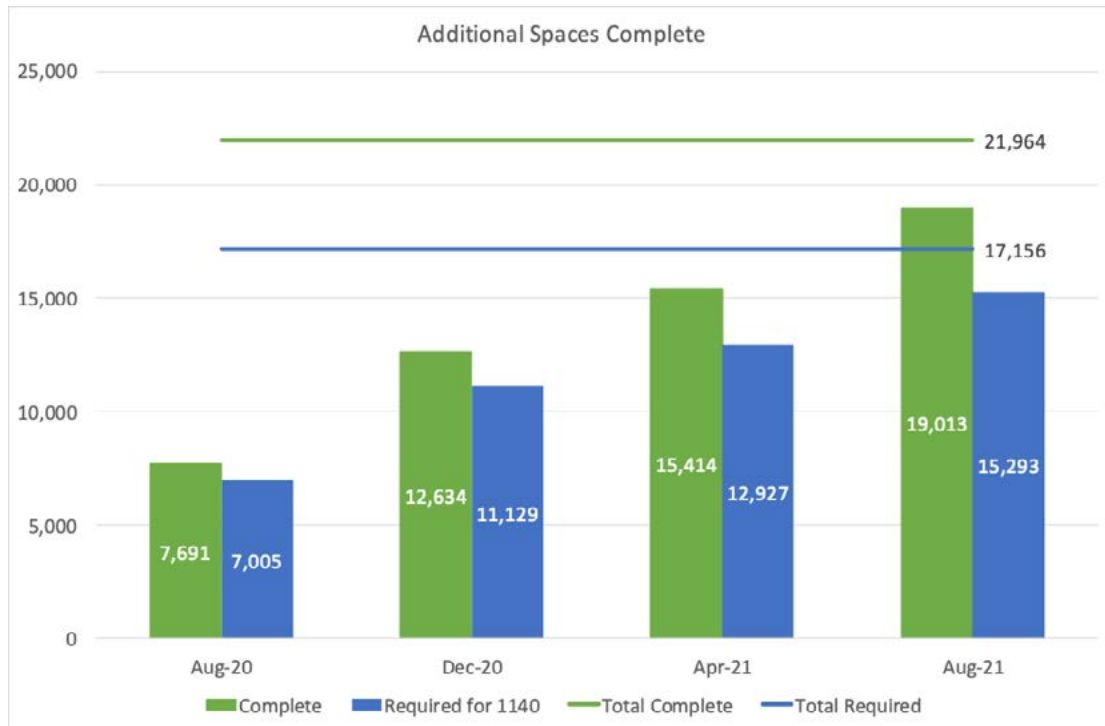


Figure 13: Total Planned Spaces vs Required Spaces



Current data indicates the following across local authorities:

- 24 local authorities will not have delivered all the required spaces complete by December 2020
- 13 local authorities will not have delivered all the required spaces complete by April 2021
- 6 local authorities will not have delivered all the required spaces complete by August 2021

Transitional arrangements and contingency plans are being identified for those projects that are not planned to be ready by August 2021. This information is based on data returns from local authorities as of August. It is important to note that there are several local variations and SFT are working with the Delivery Assurance Team to review re-phased capital programmes and the criticality of infrastructure projects as part of their wider service delivery plans. We expect the 'required' figure at both a project level and a capacity level to come down. An update will be provided for the next Joint Delivery Board.

## Impact of COVID-19

Prior to construction activity being suspended at the beginning of April in response to COVID-19, it was forecast that around 800 of the 911 capital projects in the programme would have been completed by now.

There were 187 projects scheduled to be delivering a further 7,040 spaces that were in construction as of March 2020 when construction activities were suspended on across sites in Scotland. The value of the projects on site was in the order of £197m. A further 333 projects delivering 8,307 spaces were yet to start construction.

Following the issue of the Construction Scotland Site Re-start Model on the 28th May 2020, ELC construction projects resumed activities in the order advised to from Phase 0 through to Phases 4 and 5.

There have been delays to all projects in construction and in development. The average delay on construction sites appears to be around 6 months but they vary widely across projects. Local authorities have now developed or are in the process of developing refreshed infrastructure programmes. The programme now shows a phased introduction of additional spaces between October 2020 and August 2021. Many refurbishment projects planned for the summer holiday period have been rescheduled for next summer.

The forecast out-turn capital spend on the ELC programme is currently in the order of £569m. SFT will provide a further update on capital costs at the Finance Working Group meeting in October.

**The key messages gleaned from SFT's engagement with local authorities include:**



- Local authorities are reviewing the financial impacts of lockdown on project costs and programme affordability and are looking at potential ways to mitigate some of these impacts
- There are varied rates of productivity across construction sites and local authorities are seeking ways of mitigating some of the financial impacts and delays associated with these
- There appear to be varying degrees of impact on local supply chains and availability of materials
- There appear to be varying costs impacts of impact on projects in development or at tender stage
- Capital programmes are being reviewed and re-prioritised to support delivery of 1140 requirements

# Conclusions

In response to COVID-19, the Scottish Government suspended the statutory duty on local authorities to provide 1140 hours of ELC from August 2020.

In recognition of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the ELC sector, the Joint Delivery Board at their meeting in July 2020 supported a recommendation by the IS to undertake a re-baselining of the data being collected in measurement of progress towards delivery of 1140.

The key objective of this data collection was to understand the status of the ELC sector across the country with regard to uptake, workforce and capacity as of August 2020, at the beginning of the academic year 2020/21.

The Joint Delivery Board also recognised that local authorities should be given time to consider how the pandemic might necessitate revisions to their plans for the 1140 expansion. This collection did not, therefore, request information on local authorities' plans for further expansion towards 1140.

To understand what is required to achieve the full and complete delivery of the 1140 expansion throughout Scotland, a further data collection would be necessary to identify local authorities' expansion plans across the key indicators.

Across the key indicator measurements and incorporating returned narrative, the national picture shows that delivery of the expansion has surpassed the pre-COVID forecasted position for April 2020 but has not reached the pre-COVID forecast position for September 2020.

Local authorities indicate in their returns that 61% of all children accessing funded ELC are accessing 1140 hours.

The most commonly cited barrier to the full delivery of 1140 hours for all children is delays to infrastructure projects. Some authorities note in their returns that the offer of 1140 can be extended to more children once recruitment is further advanced.

The data returned suggests that utilisation of funded providers for delivering an expanded offer is high, with 74% of children who access most of their hours with funded partners accessing 1140 hours. This has been a common feature throughout the expansion, with local authorities tending to make use of the capacity in funded provider settings during phasing while additional capacity in local authority settings was being generated.

As in previous delivery progress reports, there is variability at a local level with some local authorities delivering expanded funded hours to a greater proportion of children than others.



# Appendix 1 – Detail on the Revised Data Collection Framework

The revised framework is based on the same indicators as the previous framework but asks that local authorities report on the totality of the service rather than the additionality from the baseline. Measuring totality in this way removes ambiguity in the interpretation of the measurement of additionality that may have existed in the previous framework.

The key indicators measured are as follows:

- Uptake: Split by both age and provider type, measuring different levels of provision being accessed, banded from 600 through to 1140 hours
- Local Authority Workforce: How many staff are employed in ELC in total, split by job type (e.g. managers, teachers, practitioners etc.)
- Capacity in Local Authority Settings: Current operating model, and current operating capacity
- Capacity in Funded Provider Settings: Identifying how many settings are in partnership and the levels of provision accessed there
- Capacity in Childminders: How many childminders are in partnership, and for how many children do they provide funded ELC

Across uptake and workforce indicators it is possible to compare results from the new and old frameworks:

$$\text{Additionality} = \text{Current Reported Measurement (August 2020)} - \text{Pre-Expansion Measurement (Academic Year 2016/17)}$$

For the capacity indicator, no measurement was made in academic year 2016/17, so only the current measurement can be reported on.



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Nov 2020



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