



Early Learning and Childcare Expansion Delivery Progress Report

May 2022



Scottish Government
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Key Messages



- This data collection provides an update on the status of ELC delivery in April 2022.
- Data returned by local authorities indicates that 121,101 children were accessing funded ELC as of the end of April 2022.
- Of these, 117,780 (97%) were accessing more than 600 hours, and 104,923 (87%) were accessing the full 1140 hours funded ELC.
- There has been a year-on-year increase in numbers of 2- to 5-year-old children reported to be accessing funded ELC (3% increase).
- Amongst eligible 2-year-olds, there are continued year-on-year increases both in the number of children accessing funded ELC, and in the proportion of children accessing the full 1140 hours.
- The local authority ELC workforce is reported to have increased by 8,845 FTE since academic year 2016/17, including an increase of 357 FTE since January 2022.
- Funded providers in the private and voluntary sectors and childminders provide 31% of all funded provision.

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.

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 April 2022.

This report aims to summarise the status of the sector at the end of April 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 25th April 2022.

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)

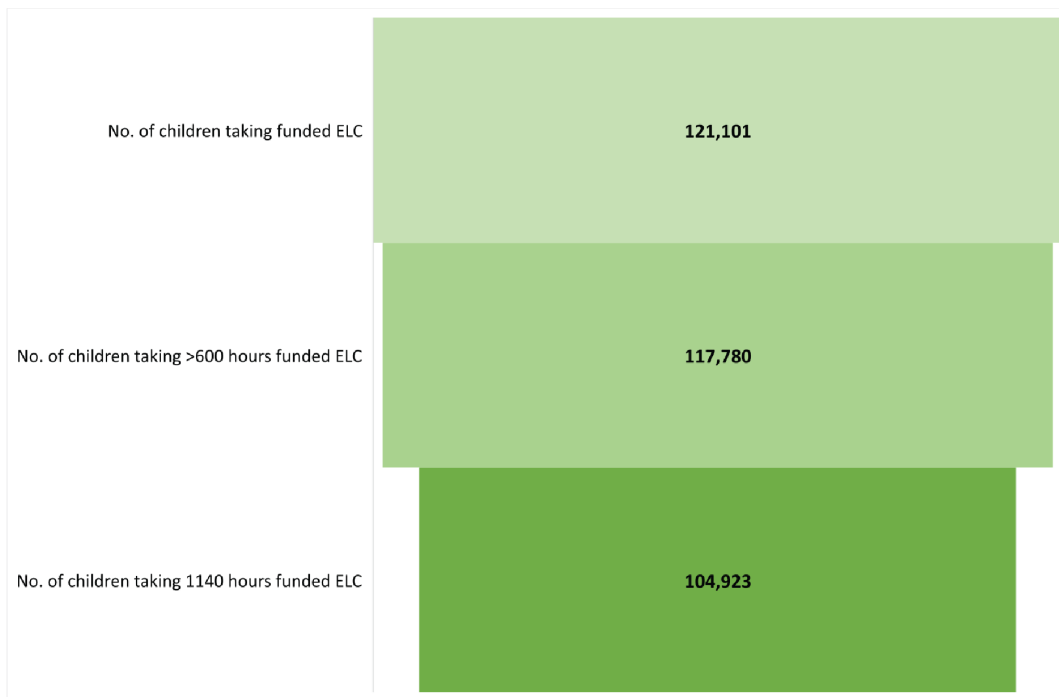


Figure 1: Number of children (2-5-years-old) accessing levels of funded ELC

The number of children reported to be receiving funded ELC in April 2022 was 121,101. Of these, 97% (117,780 children) were reported to be accessing more than 600 funded hours, and 87% (104,923 children) were reported to be accessing 1140 funded hours (Figure 1).

The number of children eligible for funded ELC increases throughout the academic year as more children turn 3-years-old. As such, the number of children accessing funded ELC is necessarily higher in this session (April 2022) than was noted in the last Delivery Progress Report (January 2022).

For a comparison point, we instead look back to the collection that took place in April 2021. In doing so, it can be seen that at a national level, there has been a year-on-on increase in numbers of 2- to 5-year-old children reported to be accessing funded ELC of 3% (increasing from 118,068 in April 2021 to 121,101 in April 2022).

There has been no change since January 2022 in the proportion of children receiving more than 600 hours (97%) or the proportion of children accessing 1140 hours (87%).

It should be noted that this measurement reflects the number of children accessing different 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

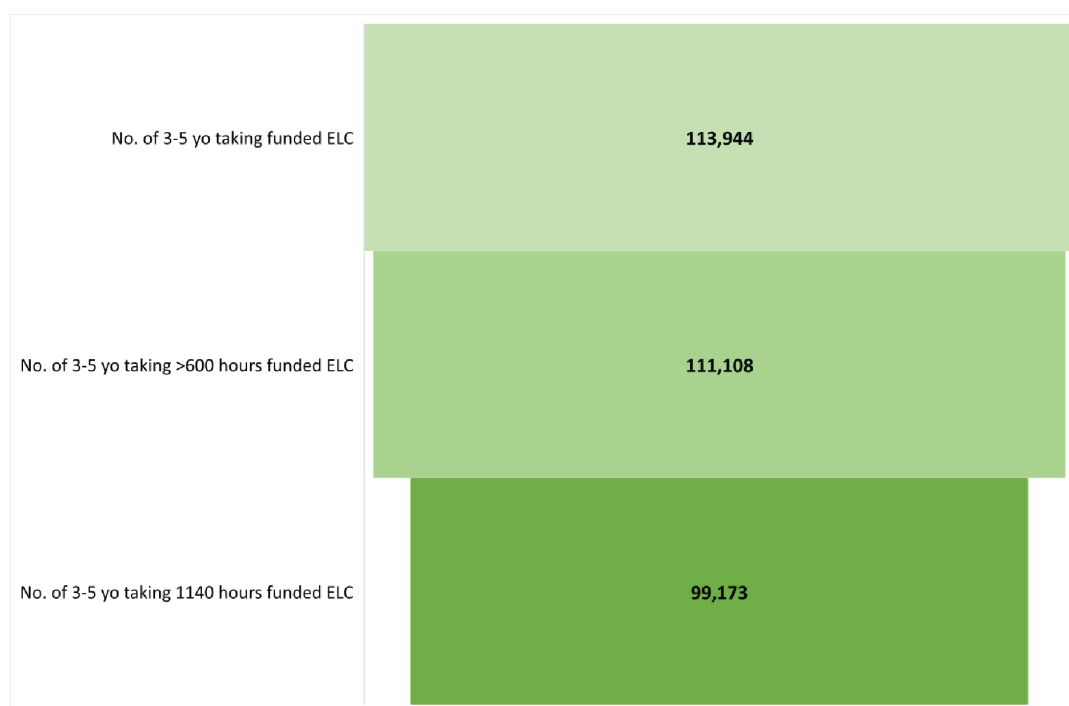


Figure 2: Number of children (3-5-years-old) accessing levels of funded ELC

The number of 3 to 5-year-olds reported to be receiving funded ELC in April 2022 was 113,944 children. Of these, 98% (111,108 children) were reported to be accessing more than 600 funded hours, and 87% (99,173 children) were reported to be accessing 1140 funded hours (Figure 2).

There has been a year-on-year increase in the numbers of 3- to 5-year-old children accessing funded ELC by 2% (up from 111,864 in April 2021).

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 April 2022 was 7,157 children. Of these, 93% (6,672 children) were reported to be accessing more than 600 funded hours, and 80% (5,750 children) were reported to be accessing 1140 funded hours (Figure 3).

Although the proportions of those children accessing funded ELC who are accessing expanded hours (both categories of over 600 and the full 1140) remain lower for the 2-year-old population than they are for the 3- to 5-year-old population, these proportions have been increasing throughout the academic year since the statutory duty came into effect, as shown in Table 1 below.

	August 2021	January 2022	April 2022
Proportion of 2-year-olds in receipt of funded ELC who are accessing more than 600 funded hours	90%	91%	93%
Proportion of 2-year-olds in receipt of funded ELC who are accessing 1140 funded hours	72%	78%	80%

Table 1: Change in proportion of 2-year-olds in receipt of funded ELC who are accessing expanded hours over academic year 2021-22

There has also been a year-on-year increase in the number of 2-year-old children accessing funded ELC by 15% (up from 6,204 in April 2021).

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 April 2022.

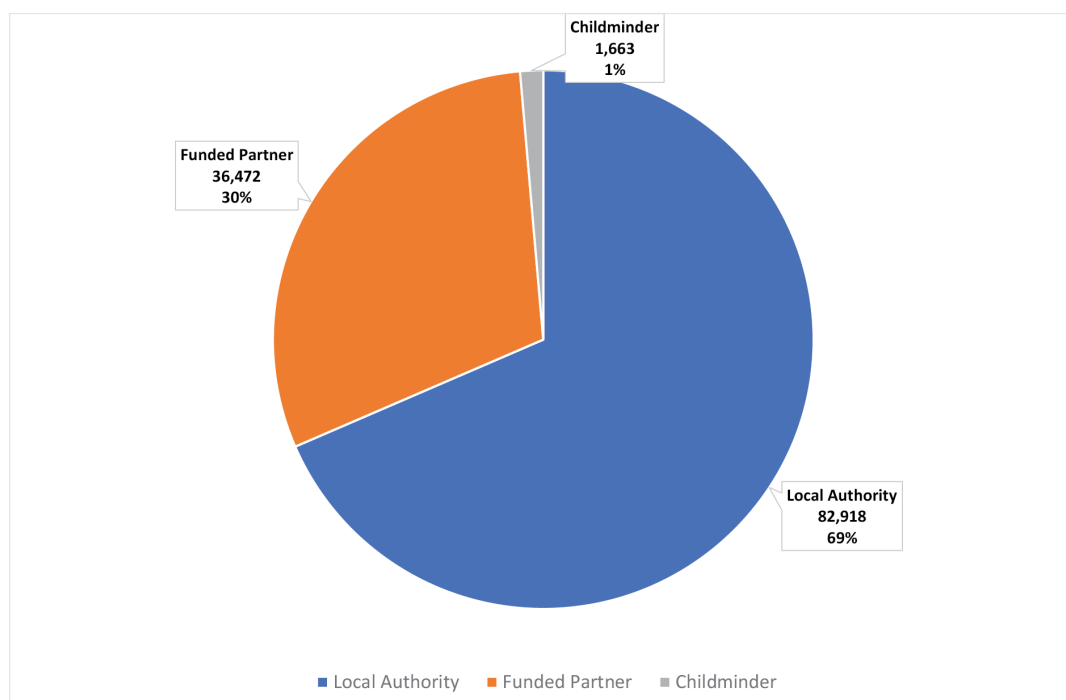


Figure 4: Uptake of funded ELC split by provider type

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 shows that for April 2022, 30% of provision was being accessed in private settings, compared to 69% in local authority settings, with the remainder being accessed with childminders. These proportions have remained relatively static throughout this academic year (2021-22)

Of all children who are accessing the majority of their hours with funded providers, 83% are

accessing 1140 hours, compared with 89% in local authority settings.

Local authorities reported that, as of April 2022, 1,166 childminders were in partnership to deliver funded hours. This is a decrease of 69 from the figures reported in January 2022. 1,917 children were reported to be accessing some level of provision with childminders, an increase of 10 since January 2022.

Local Authority ELC Workforce

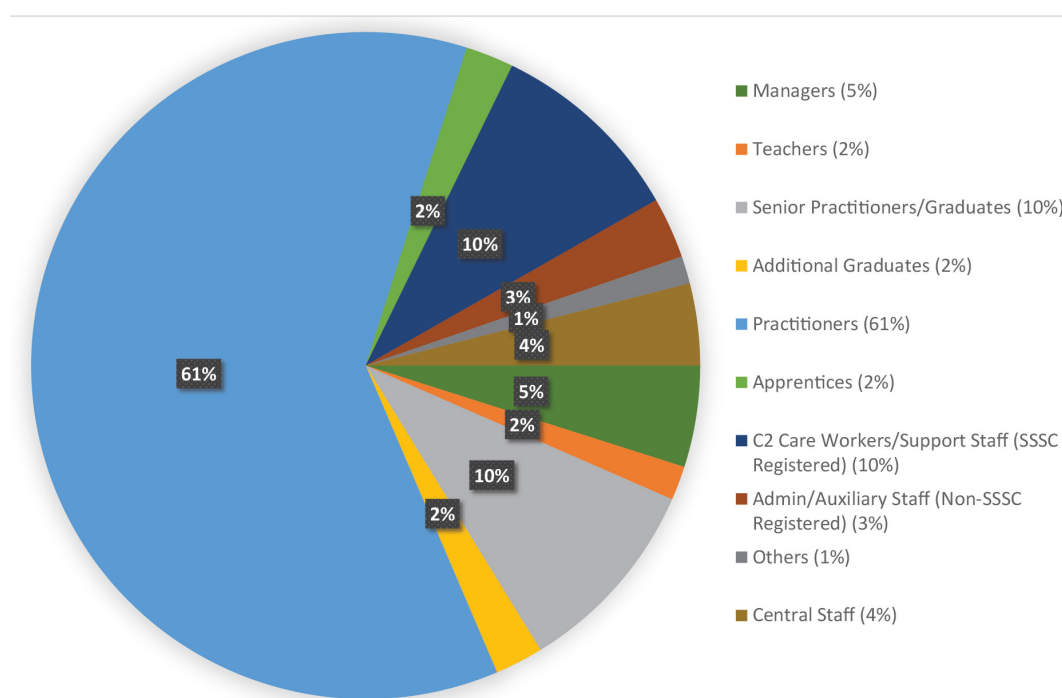


Figure 5: Local authority ELC workforce split by job type

Local authorities reported that as of April 2022 the ELC workforce in local authorities comprised of 18,421 FTE across Scotland. Figure 5 shows the split of job types in ELC nationally as of April 2022. By far the largest section of the ELC workforce are Practitioners, comprising of 11,295 FTE (61%).

When compared to the total local authority ELC workforce in academic year 2016/17, there has been an increase of 8,845 FTE. This is an increase of 92% from 9,576 FTE in academic year 2016/17.

Since January 2022, there has been an increase of 357 FTE. By far the biggest increase since January 2022 has been seen amongst Practitioners (+291 FTE).

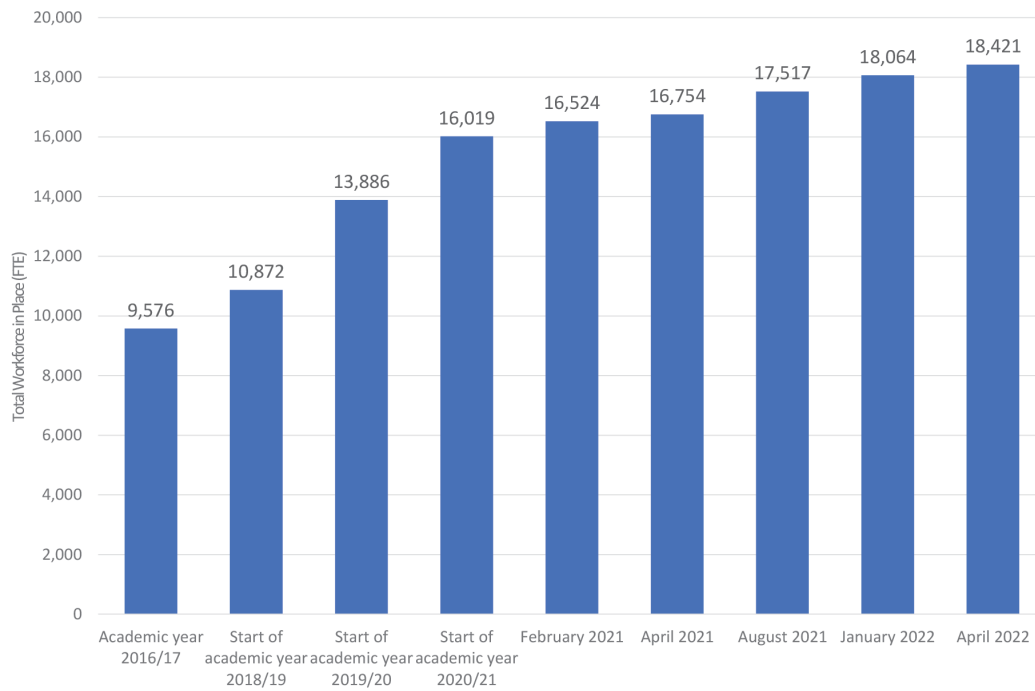


Figure 6: Total local authority workforce (FTE) in place since beginning of expansion

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

Scottish Futures Trust – Infrastructure Commentary

In previous Delivery Progress Reports SFT have provided data and narrative on the progress of the infrastructure programme. Since the last Delivery Progress Report was published in February 2022 there has been no update to the data collected by SFT. As such, no update is given in this report, and the data from the February 2022 report stands as the most up to date information.

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 121,101 children were accessing funded ELC as of the end of April 2022, with 117,780 children (97%) accessing more than 600 hours, and 104,923 children (87%) accessing 1140 hours funded ELC.

Comparing this uptake to that seen in April 2021, at a national level, there has been a year-on-year increase in numbers of 2- to 5-year-old children reported to be accessing funded ELC (3% increase).

Amongst eligible 2-year-olds, there are continued year-on-year increases both in the number of children accessing funded ELC, and in the proportion of children accessing the full 1140 hours.

The local authority ELC workforce is reported to have increased by 8,845 FTE since academic year 2016/17, including an increase of 357 FTE since January 2022.

Improvement Service
iHub
Quarrywood Court
Livingston EH54 6AX

T. 01506 282012
E. info@improvementservice.org.uk
W. www.improvementservice.org.uk



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

