

# Early Learning and Childcare delivery model for 2020

## Introduction

The Scottish government has made a commitment to offer all three and four year olds (and some 2 year olds) in Scotland 1140 hours of free at the point of use early learning in childcare from 2020. UNISON therefore welcomed the principle of extending the current “free hours” to 1140 a year. There is no guarantee that this expansion will take place in the public sector. Where it does it will bring significant changes to the Early Learning and Childcare service (ELC). This briefing focuses on the key issues that branches will be (and already are) negotiating with employers about the implementation of this policy.

## Key Points

The Scottish government consultation on the proposed service model closed in June. A link to UNISON’s response can be found in the further information section of this briefing. The Scottish government and local authorities have reached an agreement on the levels of funding and local authorities are now finalising their plans to deliver the extended hours. This is one of the few areas of local government where funding will increase and job numbers are growing. **There is therefore an opportunity to recruit new members** and for staff currently at risk of losing their jobs to retrain to work in this sector. The “funding follows the child” model means that there is a substantial risk that much of the funding will go to private and third sector providers where pay is substantially lower.

## Bargaining Issues

UNISON is committed to the public delivery of this service but the Scottish government is not. Most authorities are planning some extension of their in-house service but from the information we have many are planning to use “partners” from private and third sector to deliver the 1140 hours. Some are also expecting childminders to deliver at least some of the extended hours. UNISON believes that high quality ELC requires a fully trained workforce and it is not yet clear what qualifications childminders will be expected to hold in order to be able to access funding.

## Working Patterns

The expanded opening hours means that some members may be asked to change their working hours and patterns. While for some the opportunity to work more hours will be welcome others will not be able to do so. Branches should be discussing these changes with employers. The number of new posts that will be needed means that there should be scope for current staff to keep their hours if they do not want to change. Staying in the same workplace may be more complex as some staff will have to be available for the longer opening hours proposed

## KEY POINTS:

- **The Scottish government is doubling the free childcare allowance to 1140 hours a year from August 2020**
- **This will mean substantial changes on the way members in early years work**
- **There will be thousands of new jobs in the early years sector by 2020**
- **The funding “follows the child” so much of the funding could be out with the public sector**



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## Outdoor learning:

The Scottish government is also increasing outdoor learning. Branches are encouraged to ensure that employers undertake appropriate risk assessments when planning outdoor learning and provide appropriate clothing, toilet facilities and breaks for staff and children working outdoors for considerable periods of time. It is also important to ensure that there are enough places in early years centres for children should bad weather lead to outdoor sessions being cancelled.

## Qualifications

In order to be able to train enough staff for the expansion there will be a move towards work based training routes in addition to the college route. This creates two main issues for branches. Branches should ensure that the trainee roles (either SVQ or apprenticeships) are genuine training roles not just cheaper staff. Only qualified staff should count on the staff to child ratio. There also needs to be clarity about who will be responsible for delivering and supervising training.

## Professional and career development

ELC staff also need time in their working day for training, reflection and ongoing professional development. Changes to working patterns still need to accommodate these needs. It is not just teachers who are qualified to hold leadership roles in early years. Creating joint headships for schools and nurseries will cut off career development opportunities for early years workers. Branches should be aware that many authorities want to move in this direction.

## Role of the extra graduate

Alongside the extra hours centres which meet the deprivation criteria will be entitled to an extra graduate post. This can be a teaching or early years degree. Each authority is drawing up its own job description and pay rates for the role. Branches should be working with employers on the details of this role to ensure it is clearly defined. UNISON's research shows clearly that there is no added value from having teachers rather than qualified early years workers in nurseries.

## Opportunities for redeployment

The lack of qualified early years staff means that those who are at risk of losing their posts within local authorities may have the opportunity to move to work in the early years following suitable training. There is therefore an opportunity for branches to keep members in employment when cuts are made to other teams.

## Recruitment

There is an opportunity for branches to recruit new members from both the new staff and existing workers. There will be opportunities in the public, private and third sector. If there are colleges offering childcare courses in your area there is also the opportunity to run recruitment events similar to those the health branches run for student nurses.

## Lunch times

Eating is a learning experience in an early years setting so there will need appropriate staffing for snack and lunch, including breaks for staff. There also needs to be a discussion on how lunches and snacks are being prepared and paid for.

## Pay

Rates of pay and pensions are substantially higher in the public than the private/voluntary sector but there are still big differences between local authorities. Those who pay less will struggle to recruit and retain staff.

## Action for Branches

Branches are encouraged to meet regularly with employers regarding the expansion of the early years service. In order to support this work branches are reminded that they are entitled to send a delegate to Education Issues Group meetings. They take place 4 times a year and lead our work in this area. The next meeting is November 23<sup>rd</sup>. If you cannot send a delegate please send details of your employers' plans to [k.sillars@unison.co.uk](mailto:k.sillars@unison.co.uk)

## Further info

UNISON response to the ELC Delivery Model

<http://www.unison-scotland.org/early-learning-and-childcare-service-model-for-2020/>

UNISON Scotland Childcare Charter

<http://www.unison-scotland.org/unison-scotland-childcare-charter/>

UNISON Research into the skills of the childcare workforce: Regarding the roles of teachers in early years settings

<http://www.unison-scotland.org/library/EarlyYearsFinalReport.pdf>

Response to the consultation on the Blueprint for ELC

<http://www.unison-scotland.org/library/Expansion-of-ELC-january-2017.pdf>



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