

Early learning and childcare statistics 2015

The provision and use of
registered daycare of children
and childminding services in
Scotland as at 31 December 2015

Published November 2016
Revised September 2017



September 2017

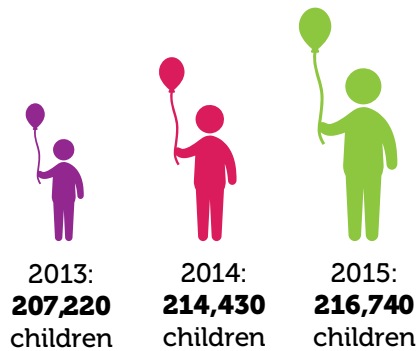
Amendments made to grading information on pages 5, 6, 28 and 41

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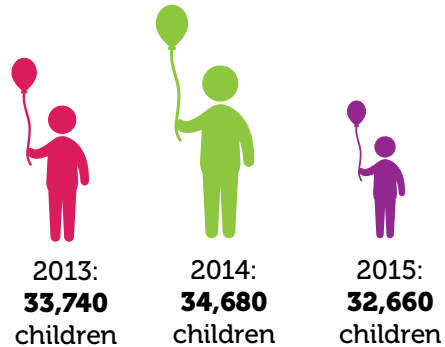
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Key points

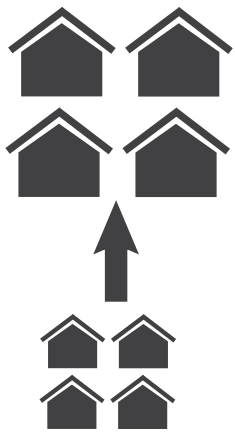
Increase in children registered with daycare of children services



Decrease in children registered with childminding services



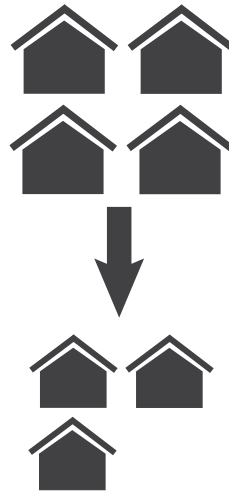
2013-15



Decrease in number of daycare of children services between 2013 and 2014. Slight increase in number of services between 2014 and 2015 (**3757 to 3772 = +0.4%**)

Services are getting bigger, average is up from **41.2 to 43.3** children

Total number of registered places (capacity) up from **154,920 to 162,220**



Decrease in number of childminding services (**6185 to 5954 = -3.7%**)

Average capacity of childminders stays the same **6.2** places per services

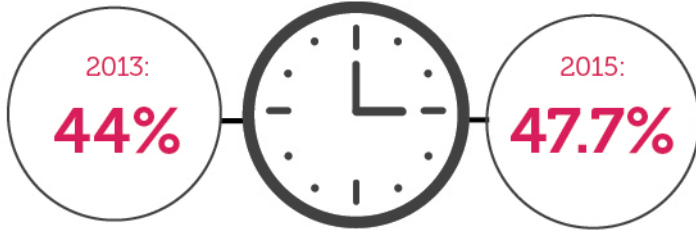
Total number of registered places (capacity): down from **35,120 to 34,220**

More daycare of children services provide funded places in 2015 compared to 2013

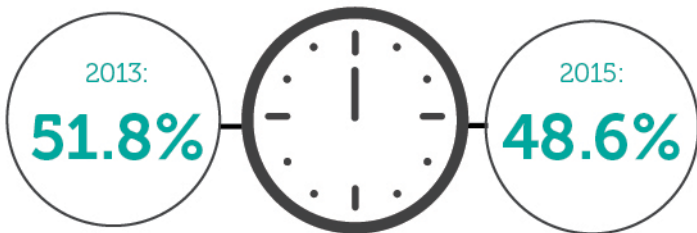


Flexibility in daycare of children opening times increased:

Choice of part or whole day sessions offered



Only part day sessions offered



More daycare of children services offer sessions during core hours during school holidays:



Early learning and childcare services are high quality services (very good or excellent for all quality themes):



Fewer complaints upheld compared to last year:



(in 2014 complaints were 62.3 per 1,000 services)



(in 2014 complaints were 14.3 per 1,000 services)

Executive summary

- In 2015 the number of children registered with early learning and childcare services increased for the second year running - to 249,400 children registered. This has been an increase of 3.5% since 2013, with the highest increase being between 2013 and 2014. The number of children registered in daycare of children services (216,740) has increased by 1.1% between 2014 and 2015 while the number of children registered with childminders has decreased to 32,660 children (-5.8%) over the year.
- For daycare of children services, fewer children were registered with holiday playschemes, voluntary/not for profit nurseries and playgroups and more children were registered with children and family centres, local authority nurseries and out of school care. This means that the overall increase is largely explained by a rise in children registered with children and family centres, local authority nurseries and out of school care.
- The overall number of daycare of children services has increased for the first time in recent years to 3,772 services (2,449 nurseries). There were fewer local authority nurseries and playgroups and more children and family centres, private nurseries and out of school care. The overall increase was mainly due to the increase in the number of private nurseries and out of school care.
- The capacity in daycare of children services has increased further to 162,220 places, which is a 3.0% increase since 2014. With playgroup and holiday playscheme capacity falling, the increase was mainly due to the increase in nursery capacity and also increases in children and family centre and out of school care capacity. As well as more services and an increased overall capacity, the average size of daycare of children services has also been increasing every year to 43.3 places in 2015.
- The number of childminders has decreased further from 6,102 to 5,954 services. With this decrease in services, the childminding capacity has also decreased to 34,220 registered places.
- The proportion of daycare of children services run by local authorities has remained stable at around 46%, while the proportion of private services has increased (30.5%) and voluntary/not for profit services (23.8%) have seen a decrease.
- The proportion of services providing funded places has increased in 2015. 92.6% of nurseries, 83.7% of children and family centres and 71.8% of playgroups provided funded places.
- There were some noticeable changes in terms of flexibility of opening times with an increase in daycare of children services (nurseries in particular) providing the option for full-day and not solely part-time sessions. For the first time, more nurseries overall were offering the option for full day sessions than those providing part day sessions only (51.1% vs. 48.9%). Similarly, there was a slight increase in the proportion of nurseries providing a service during the school holidays, with 34.0% this year compared to 32.7% last year.
- The quality of services remained high overall with 48.8% of childminders and 41.5% of daycare of children services found to be very good or excellent for all themes.

- There were proportionately more high quality children and family centres, childminders and nurseries than out of school care or playgroups. For nurseries, there were proportionately more high quality local authority services than private and voluntary/not for profit services. For out of school care this pattern was reversed, with more high quality private services than local authority and voluntary/not for profit services.
- There were fewer complaints upheld about both childminders (12.3 per 1,000 services) and daycare of children services (44.0 per 1,000 services) compared to previous years, as well as in comparison to most other service types regulated by the Care Inspectorate. For daycare of children services, most complaints investigated and upheld were about private nurseries.
- As in previous years, there were a higher number of early learning and childcare services in rural areas than in urban areas per head of child population, and the rural services tended to be much smaller in capacity than the urban services. This varied by type of service. For example, there were more nurseries per head in rural areas compared to urban areas, with more local authority than private nurseries in rural areas, while in large urban areas the proportion of local authority and private nurseries was more evenly split. For out of school care there tended to be fewer services per head in rural compared to urban areas. The number of childminders varied by urban and rural areas, with the highest level in accessible small towns and the lowest in large urban areas. The pattern for capacity was more uniform for different types of service, with services progressively being larger in size in more urban areas. While private nurseries were generally smaller in rural areas, they were largest in accessible small towns rather than urban areas. These variations in the numbers of services and their capacity by type of service across urban and rural settings explain why the highest proportion of children registered with nurseries, whether provided by the public, private or voluntary/not for profit sectors, are registered with services in remote small towns. Childminding capacity was similar in all areas.
- There were proportionately fewer childminders in the most deprived areas (21.1 per 10,000 population) than in the least (69.4 per 10,000 population). In the most deprived areas there were proportionately more children and family centres and more local authority nurseries than in the least deprived areas. There were proportionately more childminders, private nurseries and playgroups in the least deprived areas. The numbers of out of school care services were more evenly distributed across areas with different levels of deprivation.
- For some service types the quality of services also varied according to the levels of deprivation and the rurality of geographical areas. For childminding, as levels of deprivation decreased, the availability of high quality childminders increased. There were more high quality childminders in rural areas than in urban areas. For daycare of children services as a whole, there was not a clear link between availability of high quality services and levels of deprivation.

This publication is published together with a suite of data tables in Excel format. Throughout the report these are referred to as 'supporting data tables'. They are called 2015 Childcare Statistics – Supporting data tables and can be downloaded [here](#).

Definitions of the terms we use

The Care Inspectorate registers daycare of children services and childminders, which this report refers collectively to as **early learning and childcare services**.

In this report we present information on early learning and childcare services, including the following.

- The **number of daycare of children services and childminders** registered with the Care Inspectorate as at 31 December 2015 as well as over time and including provider sectors and registration status.
- **Registered children**. This is calculated as the number of children registered with a service at 31 December 2015. This means the children that are on the books of services, but might not be attending a service every day or for part day sessions only. There is an element of double counting to the registered children, as children can be registered with more than one service. The number of registered children will be higher than the capacity of services due to children not attending all at the same time (for example, part time sessions).
- **Capacity**, which is maximum attendance in a service at any one time, measured by number of registered places.
- Information on the quality of early learning and childcare services through analysis of **grading data** as at 31 December 2015.
- Information on those **complaints** in early learning and childcare services, that were investigated by the Care Inspectorate between January and December 2015.
- Information on **enforcements** issued by the Care Inspectorate to early learning and childcare services between April 2015 and March 2016.
- Information on **funded places** and the number of children receiving funding under the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 as at 31 December 2015.

Childminding is defined by the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010 as:

Looking after one or more children on domestic premises for reward for a period of more than two hours in any day. However this does not include:

- where children are closely related to the carer
- the fostering of children
- caring for children in their own home.

By law, all childminders must be registered with the Care Inspectorate.

Childminding is usually provided from the childminder's home for a small number of children and often includes the childminder's own children. Childminders are self-employed and can operate in several ways.

- An individual may operate a childminding service alone.
- A partnership of two or more people may operate a single registered childminding service.
- Childminders that are separately registered may work together in the home of one of the registered childminding providers.
- A childminding service may have paid or unpaid assistants to help provide the childminding service, no matter which of the operating methods is used.

Daycare of children is defined by the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010 as a service which provides care for children on non-domestic premises for a total of more than two hours per day and on at least six days per year. This includes nurseries, crèches, out of school care and playgroups. These services can be run by the public, private or voluntary sector and require to be registered with the Care Inspectorate whether or not parents pay for the service.

The definition does not include services for school aged children provided by schools. Nor does it include supervised activities where care is not provided, including sports clubs and uniformed activities such as the Scouts or Guides.

For the purposes of this statistical report, each of the registered daycare of children services has been assigned to one of the following categories of main service provision. This main service category is based on information supplied in annual returns. If a service did not respond to an annual return in a given year, then their main category of service has been estimated by using annual return information submitted in another year, or from other information about the service, for example their conditions of registration.

Main service category	Description
Children and family centre	Sometimes called community nurseries, children and family centres usually provide a full-time service for children aged 0-5 years. The majority are provided by local authorities. They usually prioritise children with the greatest needs together with a range of support services for families.
Crèche	Provides drop-in care for children in order to enable adults to engage in activities such as further education, shopping or attending a meeting.
Holiday play scheme	Provides care for school aged children during the school holidays. This does not include activity-based clubs.
Nursery	Provides daycare facilities for children aged 5 years or under. The service is normally used by parents/carers on a regular basis rather than a drop-in basis and the service is provided as a minimum during the school term. Nurseries provide early learning and childcare for children not yet attending school. Nurseries can take several forms, such as a private nursery, a local authority nursery class or school and a nursery that is part of an independent school.
Nursery providing additional childcare such as a breakfast club or out of school care	As above but where additional childcare (for example, breakfast club or out of school care) is recorded as being provided.
Out of school care	Provides care for school aged children after the end of the school day and sometimes also before school starts. Many also provide a full-day service during the school holidays. Can be provided by the public, private or voluntary sectors, with many voluntary sector out of school clubs run by parent committees.
Out of school care providing additional childcare, such as a breakfast club or holiday play scheme	As above but where additional childcare (for example, breakfast club or holiday play scheme) is being provided.
Playgroup	Mostly voluntary sector services run by a parent committee, often with parents taking part in a rota to assist paid staff.
Other services	Includes housing support related services, for example women's aid centres, and also services that cannot be easily assigned to one of the other categories (for example, services providing for additional needs up to age 16 on a respite basis).

Provider types in early learning and childcare services

Local authority providers: this includes services run by a local authority and also three services run by health boards.

Private providers: all childminders are run as private businesses. Private providers operate on the basis of making a profit. They can offer funded places in partnership with the local authority.

Voluntary/not for profit providers: Voluntary/not for profit providers generally re-invest any profits back into the services.

Funded early learning and childcare

Under the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, local authorities have significantly increased the amount of early learning and childcare provided. The funding for all 3 and 4 year old children initially increased from 475 to 600 hours per year and extended to eligible 2 year olds. Other children may also receive the funding at the discretion of the local authority. This is now increasing to 1140 hours per year by 2020 for those children. The Scottish Government issued statutory guidance to local authorities on implementing the expanded hours, but it is up to each local authority to decide which services in their area provide funded places.

Earlier this year the Care Inspectorate published a [Review of Scotland's Early Learning and Childcare Expansion](#), which provided a national analysis of the success of local authorities in implementing Parts 6, 7 and 8 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act (2014). Further reviews of the expansion of funded early learning and childcare and the impact on children and families will be published by the Care Inspectorate as the 1140 hours are implemented.

Other types of funding for children to attend early learning and childcare services may be available from other sources. However, most funding is under the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act (2014) and therefore is described in this publication as 'funded early learning and childcare' or 'funded places'.



1. Children registered with early learning and childcare services in Scotland

Overall, 249,400 children were registered with an early learning and childcare service in 2015. This excludes crèche services. Of these, 216,740 (86.9%) children were registered with daycare of children services and 32,660 (13.1%) were registered with childminders (see table 2 below and supporting data table 1a).

Children aged 3 and 4 were the most likely to be registered with at least one early learning and childcare service in Scotland (daycare of children services and childminders, excluding crèches). **Note that children registered with more than one service will be counted more than once.**

There were 92.1 children registered with early learning and childcare services per 100 population of 3 year old children, and 109.7 per 100 population of 4 year old children. This reduces to 49.8 registrations per 100 population of 2 year old children and 31.2 per 100 population of 1 year old children. There were only 6.4 registered children per 100 babies under the age of 1. Once children reached school age, the number of registered children per 100 population dropped to 22.3 for 5 year old children and 20.9 for 6 year old children. For 7 to 11 year old children this dropped further to 17.5 per 100 population and only 1.9 for children aged 12 and over (see table 1 below and supporting data table 1a). The majority of these older children were registered with out of school care services and holiday playschemes.

Table 1: Registered children with early learning and childcare services (excl. crèches) per 100 age specific population, as at 31 December 2015

	Scottish child population by age group	Number of children registered 31 Dec 15	Registration per 100 population of each age group
under 1 year old	56,297	3,620	6.4
1 year old	57,452	17,900	31.2
2 year old	59,228	29,500	49.8
3 year old	61,007	56,170	92.1
4 year old	58,246	63,920	109.7
5 year old	59,776	13,330	22.3
6 year old	59,654	12,490	20.9
7 - 11 year old	276,877	49,310	17.5
12 years old and over	222,745	4,140	1.9
Total	911,282	249,400	

There is an element of double counting to the registered children, as children can be registered with more than one service.

1.1 Number of children registered by main service category

The proportions of children registered with childcare services were similar to those in 2014, with a slight decrease in some of the age groups and increases in others. Due to the variance in figures provided by crèches we have revised previous years' figures to exclude children registered to attend crèches.

Table 2: Number of children registered with early learning and childcare services, by main type of service, as at 31 December 2013, 2014 and 2015 (excluding crèches)

	2013(r)	2014(r)	2015
Childminding	33,740	34,680	32,660
Children and family centre	10,220	10,100	11,440
Holiday playscheme	4,090	4,460	3,960
Nursery	140,010	142,790	143,000
of which: local authority		76,100	76,830
of which: private		56,960	56,940
of which: voluntary/not for profit		9,730	9,230
Out of school care	42,210	46,080	47,890
Playgroup	8,530	8,000	6,780
Other services	2,160	3,000	3,670
Total	240,960	249,110	249,400
Total (excluding childminders)	207,220	214,430	216,740

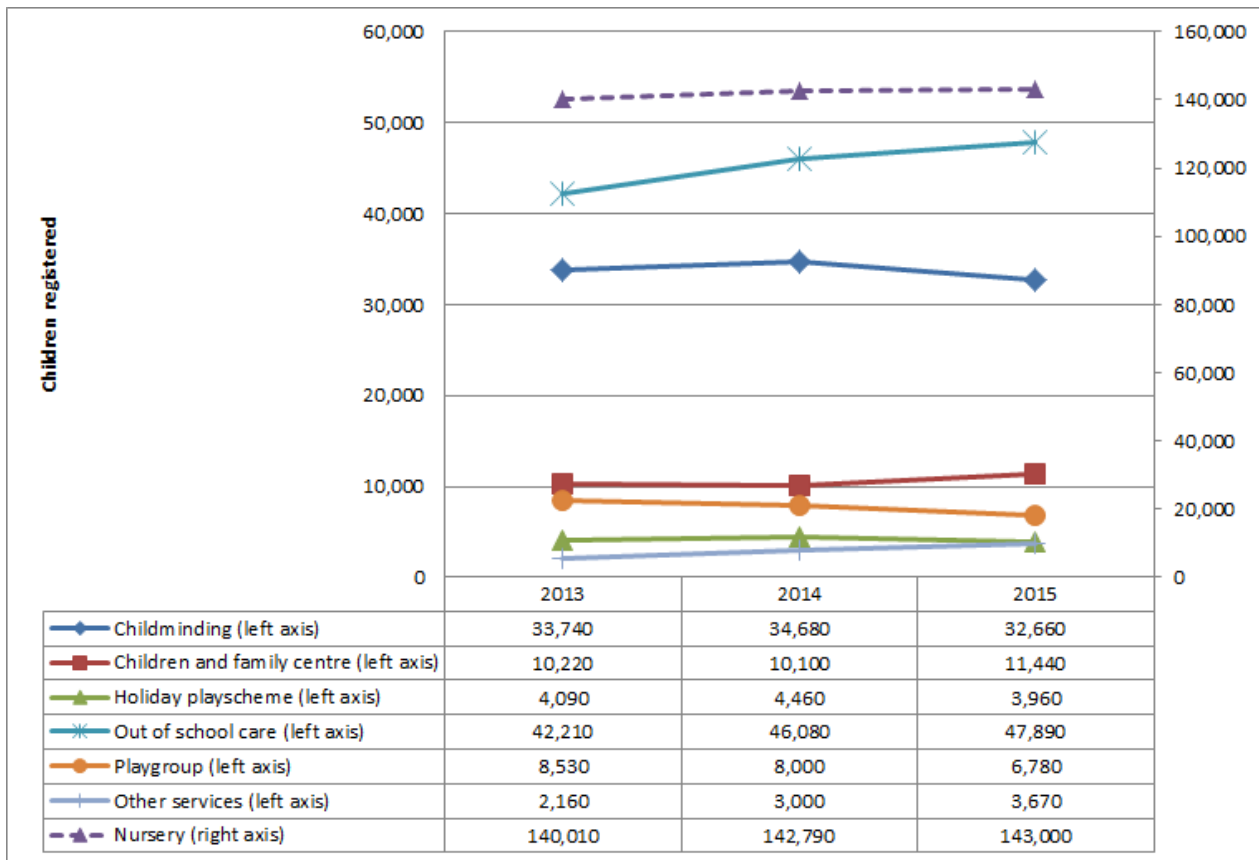
(r) Figures for 2013 and 2014 have been revised to exclude children registered to attend crèche services. The data published in 'Early learning and childcare statistics 2014' and 'Early learning and childcare statistics 2013' included children registered to attend a crèche.

There were 216,740 children registered with daycare of children services in 2015, an increase of 1.1% from the 214,430 children registered in 2014. Since 2013 the number of children registered with daycare of children services has increased by 4.6%. 32,660 children were registered with childminders, which was a decrease from 34,680 children registered in 2014 (-5.8%) (see table 2 above).

The number of children registered with children and family centres, nurseries and out of school care services has increased since last year, while the numbers of children registered with childminders and playgroups have decreased (see figure 1 below).

Figure 1

Number of children registered with childcare services, by main type of service, as at 31 December 2013, 2014 and 2015



It is not unusual for children to attend and be registered with more than one service. For example, a child may attend a local authority nursery for their funded 600 hours of early learning and childcare, and a private nursery or childminder for additional childcare¹. For this reason, it is likely that the number of children registered with a service presented in this report will be higher than the number of individual children who were using early learning and childcare services.

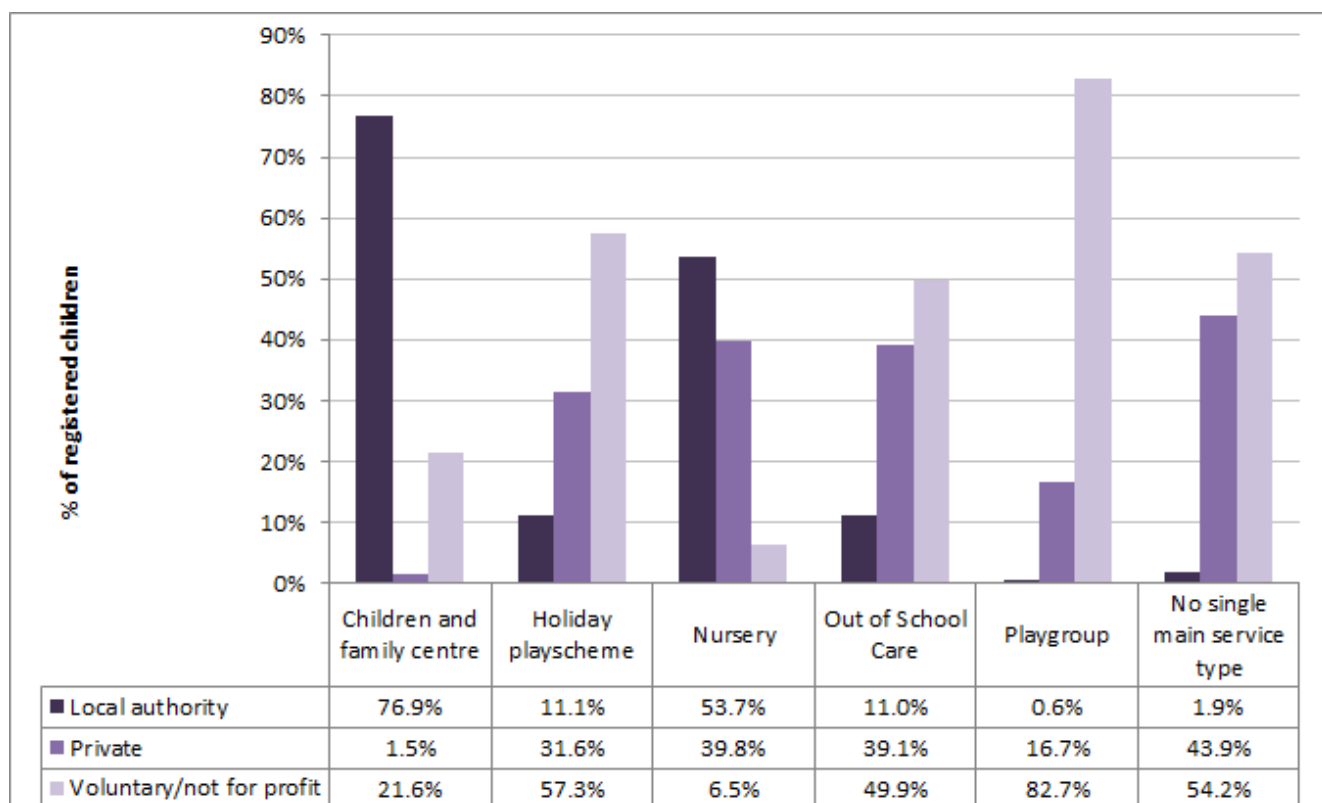
Most children were registered with local authority providers (mainly local authority, and a few services provided by health boards) (42.2%), followed by the private and voluntary/not for profit providers (36.8% and 21.0% retrospectively).

Figure 2 shows that:

- most children registered with children and family centres and a majority of children registered with nurseries used local authority services
- the private sector provided services for around 40% of children registered with nurseries and out of school care
- the voluntary/not for profit sector provided services for most children in playgroups and the majority of children registered with holiday playschemes and out of school care.

¹For more detailed information on services providing funded hours of early learning and childcare please see chapter 3 'early learning and childcare funding in Scotland'.

Figure 2
Percentage of registered children in daycare of children services by provider sector as at 31 December 2015



1.2 Children registered aged under 1 year

In 2015, for the first time, we collected data on the numbers of children registered with a service that were under 3 months of age, between 3 and 6 months of age and those aged 6 to 12 months. The Children and Young Person’s (Scotland) Act (2014) introduced a range of policies aimed at reducing inequality and improving the lives of all children and young people in Scotland. While the main focus has been on increasing the availability of funded places for children aged 2, 3 and 4 years, other initiatives recognise the importance of providing support as early as possible, including pregnancy and very young children. Alongside Scottish Government’s increasing support for early intervention, other organisations have also focused attention on the wellbeing and care of very young children. As part of this, we have included more specific statistics and analysis regarding the care of babies in registered settings. In 2015, 0.3% of childminders, 0.7% of nurseries and 7.4% of children and families centres had very young babies between 0 and 3 months registered. This increased to 10.0% of childminders, 25.9% of nurseries and 55.7% of children and families centres having children registered that were between 6 and 12 months old (see supporting tables 6a–6d for further information).

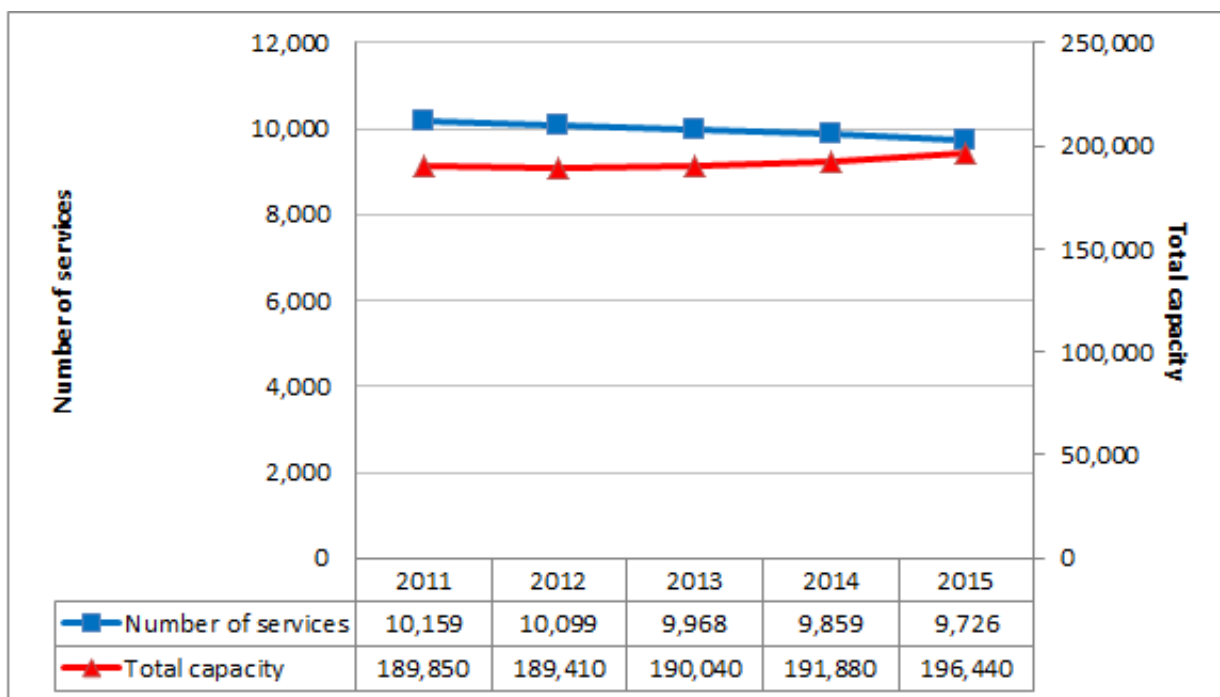
Research from Family and Childcare Trust has shown that Scottish parents make greater use of grandparents to care for very young children, compared to the rest of the UK. By looking at this specific age range, we can start to analyse trends in the use of formal care of children aged under 1 year.

2. Number and capacity of early learning and childcare services in Scotland

2.1 Numbers and capacity of childminding and daycare of children services

At 31 December 2015, there were 9,726 early learning and childcare services in Scotland, providing 196,440 places. Of these 3,772 were daycare of children services, providing 162,220 places and 5,954 were childminders providing 34,220 places.

Figure 3
All services – Number of services and total capacity



There has been an overall increase in capacity (potential maximum attendance at any one time, measured by number of registered places) in these services since 2011 of 6,590 places (3.5%). The increase of 4,560 places between 2014 and 2015 was the largest increase in any single year since 2011.

Figure 4
Childminding – number of services and total capacity

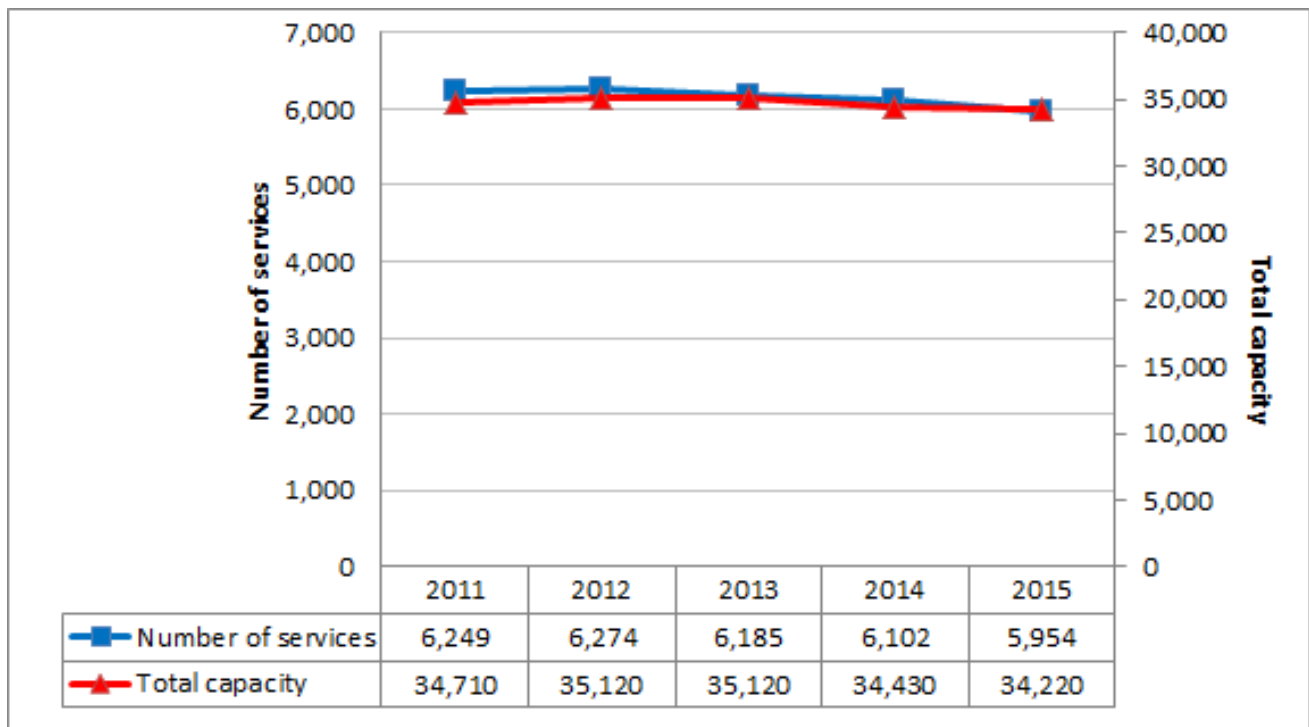
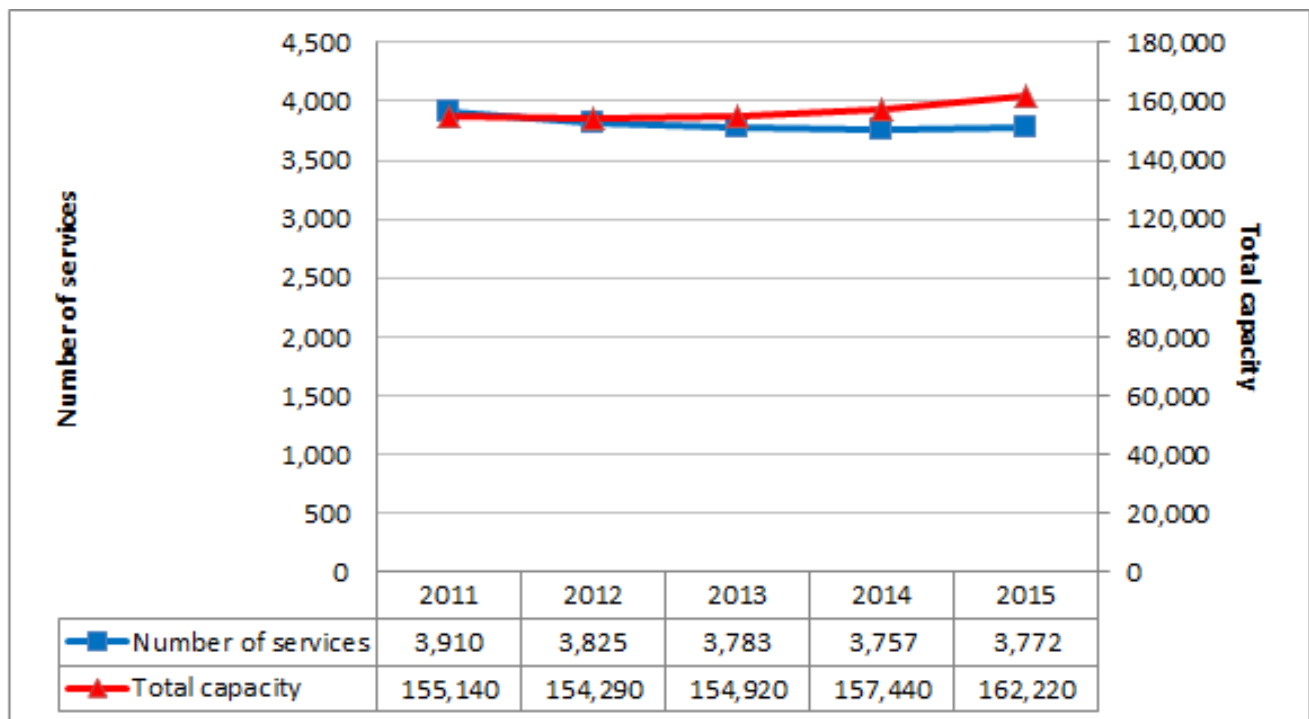


Figure 5
Daycare of children – number of services and total capacity



While the capacity in childminders decreased slightly, the overall increase in capacity was due to the increase in daycare of children capacity. The daycare of children services capacity increased by 3.0% between 2014 and 2015 to 162,220 registered places, almost two times the increase observed the previous year. These figures coincide with the expansion of early learning capacity in order to implement the increase in funded hours of early learning and childcare from 475 hours to 600 hours from August 2014.

Since 2011, the overall number of registered early learning and childcare services fell by 433 services (-4.3%), of which 138 were daycare of children and 295 were childminders. Over the past year, although the number of childminders fell by 148 services, the number of daycare of children services increased by 15 services – this is the first annual increase since 2011.

Overall, the average capacity of early learning and childcare services has increased from 20.6 places in 2014 to 21.2 places in 2015, a 2.9% increase. The average capacity in childminders has remained the same at 6.2 children per service. The average number of places in daycare of children services has seen an increase year on year and has risen again between 2014 and 2015 from 42.4 to 43.3 places per service. This is also reflected in the almost 2,000 or so variations completed by the Care Inspectorate over 2014, and 712 completed in 2015, enabling services to expand their capacity, including changes to opening times and children’s age ranges, to support the increased hours of funding.

Table 3: Average number of places in childminding and daycare of children services as at 31 December 2011 - 2015

Average Places	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Childminding	6.1	6.1	6.2	6.2	6.2
Daycare of Children	40.1	40.6	41.2	42.2	43.3

2.2 Numbers of services and capacity by service categories

Daycare of children services covers a wide range of different categories of provision, the largest of which is nurseries, followed by out of school care and playgroups. Children and family centres, crèches and holiday playschemes are also categories of daycare of children service. Each registered service may provide several different categories of service. For example a nursery may also provide out of school care, or an out of schoolcare service may also provide a holiday playscheme. We have categorised services in the tables in this report based on what they have told us is the main type of service they provide.

Figure 6
Number of registered daycare of children services by main service type, as at December 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015

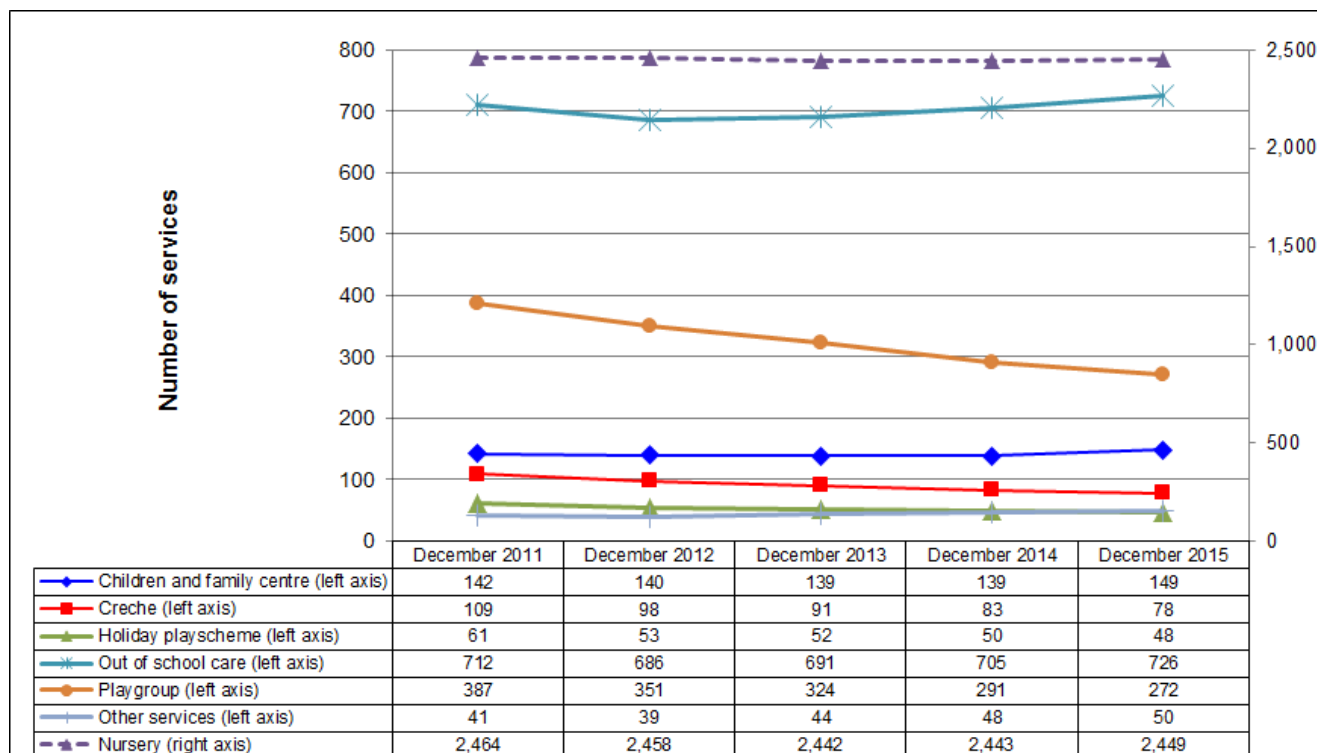


Table 4: Average places per service and total capacity of services, as at December 2011 and 2015

	2011		2015	
	Total capacity places	Average capacity places per service	Total capacity places	Average capacity places per service
Childcare services by main service category:				
Childminding	34,710	6.1	34,220	6.2
Children and family centre	7,040	49.6	8,050	54.0
Creche	4,240	40.8	2,660	35.0
Holiday playscheme	2,370	42.3	1,790	43.7
Nursery	104,050	42.6	111,390	45.8
of which: providing additional childcare eg breakfast club	21,560	-	24,800	59.8
of which: providing no additional childcare services	82,490	-	86,590	42.9
Out of school care	27,580	39.1	30,280	41.9
of which: providing additional childcare eg breakfast club	19,500	-	22,390	45.4
of which: providing no additional childcare services	8,080	-	7,900	34.3
Playgroup	8,710	22.7	6,290	23.1
Other services	1,160	30.5	1,760	35.8
Total	189,860	19.8	196,440	21.2
Total excluding Childminding	155,150	40.1	162,220	43.3

See table 24 in the supporting data tables for full information by single years 2011 – 2015.

While the capacity in playgroups and holiday playschemes has fallen, the overall increase in capacity of daycare of children services was mainly due to an increase in nursery capacity and also increases in children and family centre and out of school care capacity. These increases in nursery and children and family centre capacity are in line with the expansion of funded early learning and childcare places in order to implement the expansion of funded hours of early learning and childcare from 475 hours to 600 hours and some 2 year olds becoming eligible from August 2014 to receive early learning and childcare.

2.3a Children and family centres

Sometimes called community nurseries, children and family centres usually provide a full time service for children aged 0-5 years and their families. Most are provided by local authorities and voluntary/ not for profit organisations. They usually focus on providing a service for children and families in greatest need of support.

Between 2011 and 2014, the number of children and family centres has remained fairly constant at around 140 (see figure 6). However, over the past year, the number of children and family centres has increased by 7.2% (to 149 services). This is partly due to a number of new registrations as well as a further seven services that had previously indicated that they were operating mainly as a nursery or crèche in 2014 changing their focus to providing a children and family centre in 2015. Almost all of these services provided children and families centre as an additional provision in the past. Some also had a change of service name to emphasise the new specialism.

In line with the increase in number of services, the total capacity in children and family centres increased from 7,380 registered places in 2014 to 8,050 places in 2015, which is a 9.1% increase. This compares to a 4.4% increase in places between 2013 and 2014 (see table 4).

In 2015, a further 53 services also provided support associated with a children and family centre as an additional category. This has slightly decreased over time.

2.3b Crèches

Crèches provide drop-in care for children. The number of crèches has decreased year on year since 2011 - a reduction of services by more than a quarter from 109 crèches in 2011 to 78 in 2015 (see figure 6). The number of services offering crèche facilities as an additional service has also decreased over time, with a further 85 services offering crèche facilities as an additional type of care in 2015. Note that crèches are a category of daycare of children service that is likely to be provided for under two hours per day, or not operate more than five times per year, meaning that they do not have to be registered with the Care Inspectorate, and therefore would not be included in these statistics.

2.3c Holiday playschemes

Services providing care for school aged children during school holidays are called holiday playschemes. Services set up to mainly provide holiday playschemes have decreased year on year since 2011 by more than a quarter, from 61 services in 2011 to 48 in 2015 (see figure 6). However, this does not mean that there is less provision of care for school aged children during holiday periods, as more and more services, such as out of school care services or nurseries are offering this as an additional service (555 services in 2015 compared to 532 in 2014 and 523 in 2013). The continuing decrease in the number of registered playschemes should also be seen in the context of most playschemes not being registered because they provide 'activity clubs', which are not eligible to be registered with the Care Inspectorate.

2.3d Nurseries

Nurseries mainly provide early learning and childcare for children not yet attending school. Nurseries can take several forms, from a nursery class attached to a primary school, to a stand-alone nursery. They are operated by public, private and voluntary/not for profit providers. Local authorities provide a mixture of stand-alone nursery schools and nursery classes attached to primary schools, offering mainly part-year and part-time places for children aged 3 to 5 years. More recently, many local authority nurseries have increased their opening times and are taking children from aged 2 years, due to the expansion of funded early learning and childcare hours. The private and voluntary/not for profit providers tend to provide stand-alone nurseries that provide mainly full-year, part- and full-time care for children aged 0-5, with many private nurseries also providing additional services such as out of school care. Many private and voluntary/not for profit nurseries are in partnership with local authorities to provide the 600 hours of funded early learning and childcare.

The number of nurseries has remained relatively constant over time, at around 2,450 services, showing a very slightly decreasing trend over time. Between 2014 and 2015, the number of nurseries increased very slightly (see figure 6).

Of the 2,449 nurseries in 2015, 60.4% were local authority nurseries, 32.4% were private nurseries and 7.2% were the voluntary/not for profit nurseries. The increase between 2014 and 2015 was accounted for by private providers, as both the local authority and voluntary/not for profit nurseries decreased (by 2 and 6 services respectively) while the number of private nurseries has increased by 20 services (see supporting data table 13b).

In 2015 nurseries offered 111,390 registered places for children, an average of 45.8 places per nursery. The total capacity in nurseries has increased year on year from 104,050 registered places in 2011 to 111,390 registered places in 2015, an increase of 7.1%. Nursery capacity has increased by 2.9% in 2015 compared to 1.9% between 2013 and 2014 (see table 4). With this increase in the overall capacity and a slight overall decrease in the number of nurseries, the average capacity per nursery has increased year on year from 42.6 registered places in 2011 to 45.8 in 2015. Private nurseries are generally larger (average 58.5 places) compared to local authority nurseries which have 39.3 registered places on average.

2.3e Out of school care services

These services provide care for school age children after school finishes and sometimes before school starts. Many also provide a full-day service during school holidays. The number of out of school care services had been decreasing steadily up to 2012, but has increased year on year since 2013. Between 2014 and 2015, the number of services has increased by 3.3% to 726 services (see figure 6).

In 2015, out of school care services offered 30,280 registered places for children, an average of 41.9 places per service. The total capacity in out of school care services has increased year on year from 27,580 registered places in 2011 to 30,280 registered places in 2015, an increase of 9.8%. The average capacity per out of school care service has also increased year on year from 39.1 registered places in 2011 to 41.9 in 2015 (see table 4).

In 2015, a further 281 services provided out of school care as an additional category, a figure which has increased slightly over time.

2.3f Playgroups

Playgroups are often provided by the voluntary/not for profit sector and are run by a parent committee, usually with parents taking part in a rota to assist paid staff. Playgroups have usually provided part-day sessions for children aged 2.5 to 5 years, but many are increasing their opening hours and taking children from 2 years, due to the expansion of funded early learning and childcare. In 2015 the 272 registered playgroups offered 6,290 registered places. The capacity in playgroup services has decreased by 7.2% in 2015 compared to a 10.8% decrease in capacity between 2013 and 2014 (from 7,600 places to 6,780) (see table 4).

Over time, the number of playgroups has been falling, and between 2014 and 2015 they decreased by a further 6.5% (see figure 6). The reduction in the number of registered playgroups reflects the decision of some playgroups to close. However the position of playgroups is more complex than this. While some playgroups are no longer registered because of closing completely, other playgroups continued operating but decided to reduce their opening hours to two hours or less per day and therefore could

not continue to be registered. At the same time, with many local authorities going into partnership with playgroups to provide funded places, other playgroups decided to increase their opening times and lower their age range to take children from aged 2 years.

2.4 Unregulated services

Any service that cares for children without their parents/carers present on non-domestic premises for more than two hours a day and more than five days a year is required to register with the Care Inspectorate as a daycare of children service. This requirement to register applies whether or not there is a charge for using the service. Some playgroups, playschemes and crèches operate for less than two hours per day and are not registered. Parent and toddler groups are not required to register because the children’s parent/carers are present.

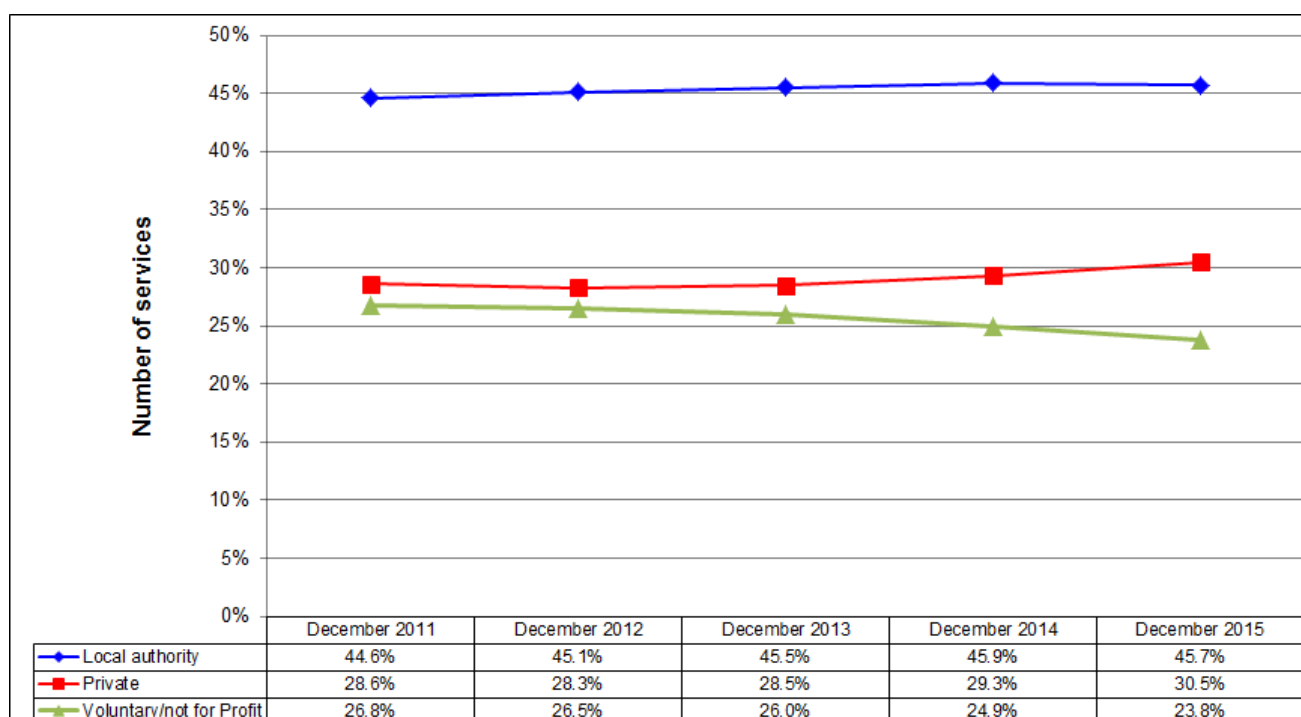
Someone who cares for children in domestic premises for more than two hours per day is required to register as a childminder providing they receive payment or some kind of reward. Nannies care for children in the child’s home and are not required to register and can only care for children from two families.

2.5 Services by provider sector

All childminders are private services.

45.7% of daycare of children services were provided by local authorities (including three services provided by health boards), while 30.5% were private services and 23.8% were voluntary/not for profit services. The proportion of local authority daycare of children services has remained constant at around 45% over the past five years, while the proportion that are private has increased by 1.9 percentage points and the proportion that are provided by voluntary/not for profit organisations has decreased by three percentage points between 2011 and 2015 (see figure 7 below).

Figure 7
Percentage distribution of daycare services by provider sector as at 31 December 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015



Of nurseries overall, 60.4% were provided by local authorities, 32.4% were private and only 7.2% were provided by voluntary/not for profit organisations. This is in contrast to out of school care services and holiday playschemes which had a low proportion of local authority services and a high proportion of voluntary/not for profit providers (around half of out of school care services and 68.3% of holiday playschemes) (see table 5 below).

Table 5: Number of active registered childcare services by main service category and provider sector, as at 31 December 2015

	Total active services	Number of services			Percentages of services		
		Of which:			Of which:		
		Local authority	Private	Voluntary/not for profit	Local authority	Private	Voluntary/not for profit
Childcare services by main service category:							
Childminding	5,530	0	5,530	0	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%
Children and family centre	149	100	3	46	67.1%	2.0%	30.9%
Creche	76	30	21	25	39.5%	27.6%	32.9%
Holiday playscheme	41	7	6	28	17.1%	14.6%	68.3%
Nursery	2,434	1,471	788	175	60.4%	32.4%	7.2%
of which: providing additional childcare eg breakfast club	415	129	216	70	31.1%	52.0%	16.9%
of which: providing no additional childcare services	2,019	1,342	572	105	66.5%	28.3%	5.2%
Out of school care	723	97	270	356	13.4%	37.3%	49.2%
of which: providing additional childcare eg breakfast club	493	64	190	239	13.0%	38.5%	48.5%
of which: providing no additional childcare services	230	33	80	117	14.3%	34.8%	50.9%
Playgroup	272	2	40	230	0.7%	14.7%	84.6%
Other services	49	4	15	30	8.2%	30.6%	61.2%
Total	9,274	1,711	6,673	890	18.4%	72.0%	9.6%
Total (excluding Childminding)	3,744	1,711	1,143	890	45.7%	30.5%	23.8%

Over the past three years, the proportions of nurseries by sector have remained on a similar level as in 2015 (see supporting data table 13b). The actual numbers, as well as the proportion of local authority and voluntary/not for profit nurseries, have decreased very slightly (local authority from 61.0% to 60.4% and voluntary/not for profit from 7.5% to 7.2%), while private nurseries have seen a slight increase in the proportion of services as well as actual numbers (31.6% to 32.4%; 766 to 788 active services).

The provider sectors for out of school care services have seen bigger changes when compared to nurseries, although still on a small scale. The proportions of local authority and private sector out of school care services increased slightly from 12.9% to 13.4% (local authority services) and from 32.5% to 37.3% (private services). At the same time, voluntary/not for profit out of school care services decreased from 54.6% to 49.2% of services. (see supporting data table 13b).



3. Early learning and childcare funding in Scotland

The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 has significantly expanded funded early learning and childcare. From August 2014, the funded entitlement for all children aged 3 and 4 years increased from 475 to 600 hours per year and this entitlement was also expanded to include eligible 2 year olds for the first time. This will increase from 600 to 1140 hours by 2020 for all children aged 3 and 4 years and eligible 2 year olds. The National Practice Guidance on Early Learning and Childcare that the Scottish Government issued to support implementation states:

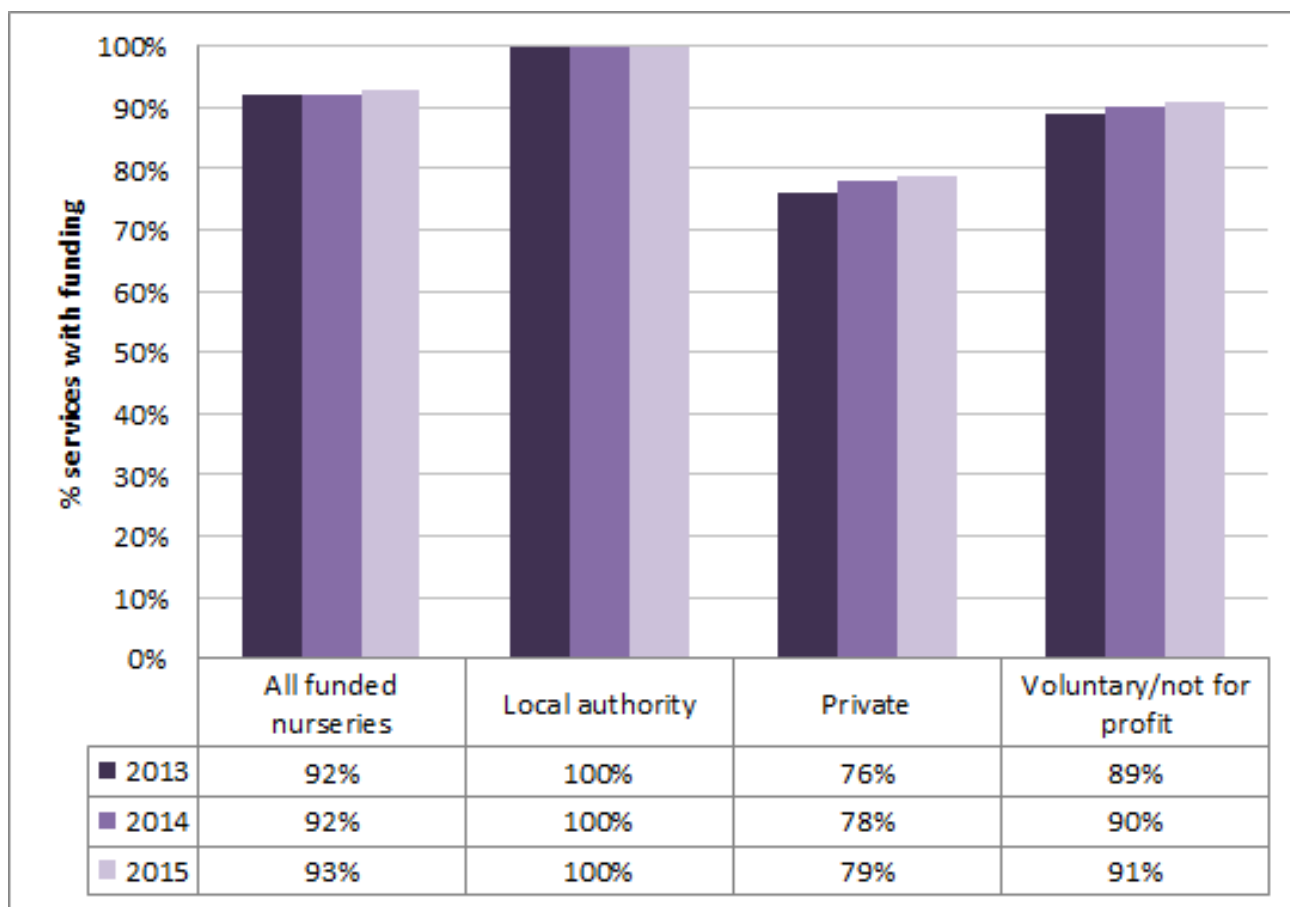
“The Act therefore introduces a new concept of early learning and childcare. The term seeks to remove an artificial divide between pre-school for three- and four-year olds; and, childcare for 0–3 year-olds, or, pre-school and wraparound care for three and four- year-olds; whereby pre-school is the educational element delivered in short blocks tied to a certain number of hours in a day; topped up by childcare or wraparound which can be seen as less important to learning.”

At the beginning of 2016, the Care Inspectorate published a national report, [Review of Scotland’s Early Learning and Childcare Expansion](#), which provided an initial assessment of the expansion and the impact on children and families. We will produce a further national overview report on how the expansion is being implemented and experienced by children drawing on the evidence from inspections.

Most of the funded places were available in nurseries. A number of local authorities were also using playgroups and childminders for funded places. In future early learning and childcare statistics publications, we will report on the funded places provided by childminders.

Figure 8 shows that, since 2013, there has been an annual increase in the proportion of nurseries offering funded places from 92% of nurseries in 2013 and 2014 to 93% of nurseries in 2015. The increase has been across all sectors. All local authority nurseries were offering funded places. The proportion of private nurseries offering the funded places has increased from 76% to 79% in 2015 and in voluntary/not for profit services from 89% to 91% of services.

Figure 8
Nurseries providing funded places, as at 31 December 2013, 2014 and 2015



The proportion of services providing funded places not only increased in nurseries but also in children and family centres and playgroups. The proportion of children and family centres offering funded places increased from 79% in 2013 and 2014 to 84% in 2015 and playgroups offering funded places increased from 67% to 72% over the same time.

Table 6: Proportion of services providing funded early learning and childcare as at 31 December 2013, 2014 and 2015

Sector	Children and family centres			Nurseries			Playgroups		
	2013 (x)	2014 (x)	2015	2013	2014	2015	2013	2014	2015
Local authority	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	33%	0%	0%
Private	67%	67%	67%	76%	78%	79%	62%	64%	66%
Voluntary/not for profit	40%	36%	49%	89%	90%	91%	69%	71%	74%
All funded services	79%	79%	84%	92%	92%	93%	67%	69%	72%

(x) Figures for 2013 and 2014 have been adjusted to reflect all local authority children and family centres providing funded places

The quality of services providing funded places was higher than those not providing funded places² (see supporting data table 32a 8 and 32a 9). For example, in 41.9% of private nurseries providing funded places, we found the grading for all themes to be very good or excellent, compared to 17.8% of private nurseries not providing funded places. Similarly, 38.6% of voluntary/not for profit playgroups providing funded places were evaluated as very good and excellent for all quality themes, compared to 19.3% not providing funded places. This indicates that local authorities are generally commissioning higher quality services to provide funded places.



²Detailed information on the grading system are included in the next chapter on the quality of early learning and childcare services

4. The quality of early learning and childcare services

The reporting on grades has changed between the previous publication and this. Grades are now reported as at 31 December 2015, in line with all the other information in the publication. Previously grades were reported as at 31 March, in line with the Care Inspectorate inspection year. In order to be able to compare to last year's figures, the grading information for 2014 has been restated to cover the same time frame from January to December, in order to support better analysis.

During inspections, the Care Inspectorate assesses 'quality themes', which cover the main areas of a service's work. How well the service performs in these areas will indicate how good the service is.

The themes are:

- quality of care and support: how well the service meets the needs of each person who uses it
- quality of environment: where the service is delivered: for example, how clean, well maintained and accessible it is, the atmosphere of the service, how welcoming it is
- quality of staffing: the quality of the staff, including their qualifications and training
- quality of management and leadership: how the service is managed and led and how it develops to meet the needs of the people who use it.

Each of the themes is evaluated using a six-point scale:

- 6 – excellent
- 5 – very good
- 4 – good
- 3 – adequate
- 2 – weak
- 1 – unsatisfactory

The quality of early learning and childcare services has remained high overall. However, compared to the previous year, the proportion of services where the quality was found to be of the highest standard (excellent or very good for all themes) has dropped very slightly. The quality of early learning and childcare services remained better than in other service types registered with the Care Inspectorate.

- As a whole, childminders were of a higher quality than daycare of children services. For example, 48.8% of childminders were found to have grades of very good and excellent compared to 41.5% of daycare services.
- There has been a slight decrease in daycare of children services graded very good or excellent for all themes from 42.5% to 41.5%.
- In 2015, a higher proportion of daycare of children services were graded weak or unsatisfactory for all quality themes: 0.5% compared to 0.3% in 2014.

Table 7: Spread of grades by service category and provider sector, as at 31 December 2015

Service Category	Provider Sector	All grades unsatisfactory/ weak	All grades very good/excellent
Children and family centre	Local authority	0.0%	64.6%
	Private	0.0%	66.7%
	Voluntary/not for profit	0.0%	51.1%
Children and family centre total		0.0%	60.4%
Creche	Local authority	0.0%	26.7%
	Private	0.0%	25.0%
	Voluntary/not for profit	0.0%	29.2%
Creche total		0.0%	27.0%
Holiday playscheme	Local authority	0.0%	66.7%
	Private	0.0%	20.0%
	Voluntary/not for profit	0.0%	35.7%
Holiday playscheme total		0.0%	42.2%
Nursery	Local authority	0.1%	51.7%
	Private	0.8%	36.9%
	Voluntary/not for profit	0.0%	39.6%
Nursery total		0.3%	46.3%
Out of school care	Local authority	0.0%	16.5%
	Private	1.4%	31.0%
	Voluntary/not for profit	1.4%	25.1%
Out of school club total		1.2%	25.8%
Playgroup	Local authority	0.0%	0.0%
	Private	0.0%	27.3%
	Voluntary/not for profit	0.4%	31.4%
Playgroup total		0.4%	30.7%
Other services	Local authority	0.0%	0.0%
	Private	0.0%	20.0%
	Voluntary/not for profit	0.0%	62.1%
Other services total		0.0%	42.9%
All daycare of children services	Local authority	0.1%	50.0%
	Private	0.9%	34.9%
	Voluntary/not for profit	0.7%	32.6%
Total		0.5%	41.5%

4.1 Spread of grades by provider sector

- **All grades of very good and excellent.** Overall, the quality of local authority daycare of children services was found to be better than private or voluntary/not for profit services. In 50.0% of local authority services the quality of care and support, environment, staffing and management and leadership was very good or excellent across these four themes, while this was the case for 34.9% of private and 32.6% of voluntary/not for profit services. The same applied to nurseries provided in the three different sectors: 51.7% of local authority nurseries had all grades of very good or excellent, compared to 36.9% of private nurseries and 39.6% of voluntary/not for profit nurseries. For out of school care this pattern was reversed, with private services having higher grades than voluntary/not for profit services. Local authority services had the lowest proportion of services with all grades excellent or very good. (See table 7 on the previous page and supporting data tables 32a).
- **All grades of weak or unsatisfactory.** There were very few services for which the quality was found to be weak or unsatisfactory across all themes (17 childminding and 17 daycare of children services). The comparisons below should be used with caution as they relate to a small number of services where a change of one or two services can mean a high change in percentage.

Overall, and across all themes, private sector daycare of children services had the highest levels of services graded weak or unsatisfactory and the lower levels of services graded very good or excellent compared to local authority services. However, this pattern varied considerably by service category. For nurseries, the private services had the highest levels of services graded weak or unsatisfactory for all themes and the lowest levels of services graded very good or excellent across all themes. Voluntary/not for profit nurseries on the other hand had the lowest levels of services graded weak or unsatisfactory for all themes. For out of school care, this pattern was different again. Across all themes, the private out of school care services had the highest levels of services where grades were found to be weak or unsatisfactory, but also the highest levels of services evaluated as very good or excellent. Across all themes the local authority out of school care services had the lowest levels of services graded weak or unsatisfactory, but also the lowest levels of services graded very good and excellent. (See supporting data tables 32a).

4.2 Grading analysis by service categories

- In both childminding and daycare of children services the quality of care and support was the highest graded theme of the four quality themes (64.4% and 63.1% graded very good or excellent retrospectively). Quality of staffing and quality of management and leadership had the highest proportions of services graded weak or unsatisfactory for these themes in both childminding (2.4%³ and 1.8% retrospectively) and daycare of children services (1.6% and 2.4%). (See supporting data tables 32b).
- Overall quality of management and leadership was the quality theme with the lowest levels of services being graded very good or excellent and with the highest levels of service being graded weak or unsatisfactory.
- As a whole, childminders and nurseries on average had higher grades than out of school care or playgroups, while children and family centres consistently had the highest grades of all early learning and childcare service types.

³Childminder staffing grade only applicable to those childminders that employ assistants. (260 childminders were graded for staffing).

4.2a Childminders

- In around 92% of childminders, the quality of care, environment and management (and staffing where applicable) was found to be good or better at 31 December 2015. Of all categories of early learning and childcare, childminding had the second highest set of grades after children and family centres.
- In 1.0% of childminders, the quality was found to be weak for at least one theme and a further 1.0% were evaluated unsatisfactory for at least one theme.

4.2b Children and family centres

- Of all categories of early learning and childcare, children and family centres had the highest proportion of services where the quality was found to be very good or excellent for all themes (60.4%) and no children and family centres were evaluated weak or unsatisfactory for all themes.
- Children and family centres had the highest proportion of services graded good or better for all themes (93.7%).
- Children and family centres had the highest proportion of services graded very good or excellent in each of the themes. The quality in almost 80% of children and family centres was found to be very good or excellent for quality of care and support and also for quality of staffing.

4.2c Nurseries

- Nurseries also had higher levels of services found to be very good or excellent for all themes, and lower levels of services were weak or unsatisfactory for all themes, compared to all early learning and childcare services. 46.3% of nurseries were found to be very good or excellent for all themes, while 0.3% were weak or unsatisfactory for all themes.
- Overall 90.6% of nurseries were at least good or better across all quality themes, but there were differences by provider sector. Local authority nurseries had the highest proportion of services found to be good or better (95.2%) followed by voluntary/not for profit services (88.8%) while private nurseries had the lowest proportion of nurseries with all themes found to be at least good or better (81.9%).
- Only 3.5% of local authority nurseries were found to be only adequate in at least one theme – considerably fewer than the 13.3% of private nurseries. Voluntary/not for profit nurseries had the lowest proportions of services found to be weak (0.6%) and none of the voluntary/not for profit nurseries were found to be unsatisfactory for any of the themes.
- Overall 67.9% of nurseries were found to be very good or excellent for quality of care and support and this ranged from 53.6% of private nurseries to 75.1% of local authority nurseries.
- None of the voluntary/not for profit nurseries were found to be weak or unsatisfactory for the quality of care and support. Local authority nurseries had a low proportion of services found to be weak for quality of care and support (0.4%), compared to 2.5% of private nurseries. The care and support in a further 0.3% of private nurseries was found to be unsatisfactory.

- The grading patterns for quality of environment in nurseries were similar to those of quality of care and support, with local authority services having higher proportions of services found to be very good or excellent, and lower proportions found to be weak or unsatisfactory for quality of environment, compared to private, and to a lesser extent voluntary/not for profit, services.
- The quality of staffing was very good or excellent in three-quarters of local authority nurseries, while this was the case in just over half of private nurseries.

4.2d Out of school care services

- Out of school care services had lower than average levels of high quality services and higher than average levels of low quality services. 25.8% of out of school care services were found to be very good or excellent for all themes and 1.2% weak or unsatisfactory for all themes.
- Overall 83.9% of out of school care services were found to be at least good or better, but there were differences by provider sector. Local authority out of school care services had the highest proportion of services found to be good or better (90.1%), while the private and voluntary/not for profit out of school care services had similar proportions of services with 82.4% and 82.9% respectively found to be at least good or better.
- Of local authority out of school care services, 9.9% were found to be adequate for at least one theme – slightly lower than the equivalent 12.0% of private out of school care services.
- None of the local authority out of school care services were weak or unsatisfactory for any themes, while 4.9% of voluntary/not for profit out of school care services were found to be weak, and a further 1.2% unsatisfactory, for at least one theme (17 and four services retrospectively).
- Just under half of out of school care services provided very good or excellent quality of care and support. While private services had the highest proportion of services found to provide very good or excellent care and support (50.9%), local authority services had the lowest proportion (42.9%).
- None of the out of school care services were found to provide unsatisfactory quality of care and support, while 2.8% of private services and 2.6% of voluntary/not for profit services were found to be weak for quality of care and support.
- In out of school care services, the quality of staffing was very good or excellent in a slightly higher proportion of private services compared to local authority services (47.2% compared to 46.2%).
- Management and leadership was very good or excellent in 22.0% of local authority services compared to 37.0% of private services.

4.2e Playgroups

- 30.7% of playgroups were found to be very good or excellent for all themes, which was lower than children and family centres and nurseries, but higher than out of school care services. On the other hand, very few playgroups were found to be weak or unsatisfactory in any theme.
- 82.2% of playgroups were found to be at least good or better for all themes. This is lower than the other early learning and childcare service categories.

- Quality of care and support was very good or excellent in more than half of playgroups (53.8%), while quality of environment and quality of staffing were very good or excellent in 49.3% and 51.5% respectively.
- As with the other main service categories, quality of management and leadership is poorer with only 39.4% of playgroups found to be very good or excellent.



5. Complaints in early learning and childcare services for the year to 31 December 2015

Complaints are now reported for the year to 31 December 2015, in line with all the other information in this publication. In previous early learning and childcare statistics publications, complaints were reported for the year to 31 March in line with the Care Inspectorate inspection year. In order to be able to compare to last year's figures, the complaints information for 2014 has been restated to cover the same time frame from January to December.

Table 8: Complaints in early learning and childcare services, between 1 January 2015 and 31 December 2015

Early learning and childcare service	Complaint ⁴ investigations completed	Number upheld	Upheld as % of all complaints investigated	Number of services with complaints upheld	Number of complaints upheld per 1,000 services	Number of complaints upheld per 1,000 places
Childminding	162	73	45.1%	67	12.3	2
Daycare of children	351	166	47.3%	130	44	1

In the year to 31 December 2015, the Care Inspectorate completed 513 complaint investigations about early learning and childcare services. Most of these were about daycare of children services (68.4%) and the remaining 31.6% were about childminders.

We upheld 166 complaints in daycare of children services (47.3%), which was lower than the 52.6% upheld in 2014. We upheld 73 complaints about childminders – 45.1% of all complaints investigated, which was lower than the 51.8% upheld in 2014.

The majority of daycare of children complaints upheld were in private nurseries (65.1% of all daycare of children complaints upheld). 12.3% of all upheld complaints for daycare of children were in local authority nurseries and 11.5% were in private out of school care services (which was a higher rate compared to voluntary/not for profit out of school care). Within early learning and childcare services, the lowest rate of upheld complaints was for children and family centres (see supporting data table 33b).

Each complaint can be about a number of different areas.

- Of the complaints we upheld about childminders, the main reasons for complaints were: general health and welfare; conditions of registration (exceeding capacity and other issues regarding conditions of registration); child protection concerns; and staffing.
- Of the complaints we upheld about nursery services, the main reasons for complaints were: general health and welfare; communication between staff and people who use the service; their relatives and carers; staff related complaints (staff levels, staff training / qualifications and staff other areas of concern); and policies and procedures.
- A similar picture applied to out of school care services with complaints upheld, where the main reasons were: general health and welfare; policies and procedures; and staffing.

⁴Count of individual complaints.

In daycare of children services, 44.0 complaints per 1,000 services were upheld, which was a decrease from 62.3 in 2014. In childminders 12.3 complaints per 1,000 services were upheld, which was also lower than in 2014 when 14.3 complaints were upheld per 1,000 services.

Both childminders and daycare of children services have much lower rates of complaints upheld per 1,000 services and per 1,000 registered places when compared with most other care service types registered with the Care Inspectorate. For example, in care homes for older people (about which we receive most complaints) 565.5 complaints were upheld per 1,000 services compared to 12.3 upheld complaints per 1,000 services in childminders and 44.0 per 1,000 services in daycare of children services (see supporting data tables 33a and 33c).



6. Enforcement against early learning and childcare services for the year to 31 March 2016

Where a service does not make improvements as required, we can use our legal powers and take enforcement action. If necessary we can take steps to close services as a last resort, subject to an appeal to a sheriff but this is a power we need to use rarely and with great care. We served a total of four childminders and nine daycare of children services with enforcement notices over the year to 31 March 2016 in order to secure improvements in care where serious defects were identified. This excludes any technical enforcement procedures (for example to close down a childminder who has moved away from their previous address and not notified us) and a further 158 enforcement notices we issued for outstanding Protecting Vulnerable Groups Scheme (PVG) checks in childminders.

7. Registered early learning and childcare services in local authority areas, urban and rural areas and by deprivation category

7.1 Local authority areas

There were some differences in the number of early learning and childcare services available and the number of children registered with services across local authorities in Scotland. In general, larger local authorities had fewer early learning and childcare services per head of population (0–15 years) and more children registered per service, compared to smaller local authorities. Areas like Glasgow, West Dunbartonshire and Renfrewshire had the lowest rates of early learning and childcare services per head of population, while rural, less densely populated areas like Orkney, Angus and Highland had the highest rates of early learning and childcare services per 10,000 head of population aged 0–5 years old. Areas like Glasgow, Renfrewshire, Edinburgh and Midlothian had the highest rates of children registered per service (more than 40 children registered per service), while Na h-Eileanan Siar (Western Isles) and Orkney had the lowest rates (fewer than 20 children registered per service). Detailed information by local authority is contained within the supporting data tables 7–9 and 18–21.

7.2 Urban and rural areas

There were proportionately more services in rural areas than in urban areas, but the services in urban areas tended to be much larger than those in rural areas.

Given these variations in the numbers of services and their sizes, the numbers of children registered with different types of services provides a more accurate snapshot of the extent to which early learning and childcare places are available for parents to use in different parts of the country and the choices they have regarding the types of service to use. Supporting data table 19 shows the numbers of children registered with different types of services as a proportion of the child population by local authority area and urban/rural classification.

Overall, more early learning and childcare services per head of population (age 0–15 years) were registered in rural areas than in urban areas.

- For childminders there were 42.1 services per 10,000 population (0-15 years) in large urban areas compared to 82.3 services per 10,000 population in accessible small towns.
- For daycare of children services there were 41.6 services per 10,000 population in large urban areas compared to 63.9 services per 10,000 population in remote rural areas.
- For nurseries the lowest numbers of services per 10,000 population were in large urban areas, other urban areas and accessible small towns (between 23.5 and 24.7 services), while there were 52.1 nurseries per 10,000 population in remote rural areas.

Looking at the size of daycare of children services in terms of capacity (maximum number of children that may attend at any one time), reverses the above findings. Daycare of children services in large urban areas had 50.7 places on average, compared to only 22.0 places in remote rural areas. The same applied to nurseries (54.7 places in large urban areas compared to 21.6 in remote rural areas) and out of school care services (47.4 places in large urban areas compared to 24.6 in remote rural areas).

Private nurseries on average were larger than voluntary/not for profit and local authority nurseries in terms of the average capacity. On average, private nurseries had 58.5 registered places, while voluntary/not for profit nurseries had 42.6 places and local authority nurseries were smaller with 39.3 registered places. The average size of nurseries decreased with rurality, meaning that nurseries in large and other urban areas were larger on average than nurseries in accessible and remote rural areas. This was also the case for each provider sector in that public, private and voluntary/not for profit nurseries all decreased in average size with an increase in rurality. Private nurseries tended to offer more places than other types of provider in each of the urban-rural categories, especially in rural areas where their capacity was around double that of local authority nurseries. In urban areas the differences between the provider sectors were not as distinct as in rural areas (see supporting table 22b).

There was a clear difference in the nursery provision by provider sector in urban and rural areas. While local authorities provided the lowest proportion (44.9%) of nurseries in large urban areas, they provided the highest proportion (86.4%) of nurseries in remote rural areas. The opposite was the case for private providers, who provided the highest proportion of services in large urban areas, and this proportion decreased with rurality. Only 7.9% of nurseries in remote rural areas were run privately, while 46.5% of nurseries in large urban areas were run privately (see supporting data table 15b).

Table 9: Children registered with daycare of children services, childminders and selected main service categories rate per 100 population of the service specific population, by urban-rural category, as at 31 December 2015

population:	All childcare services (incl. childminding, excl. creche)	All childcare services (excluding childminding and creche)	Childminding	Children and family centre	Nursery (all)	Playgroup	Out of school care (all)
	children 0-15	children 0-15	children 0-15	children 0-5	children 0-5	children 0-5	children 4-15
Urban-rural category:							
Large urban areas	30.2	28.1	2.2	5.1	41.0	1.0	10.4
Other urban areas	27.9	23.9	4.0	3.3	43.0	1.5	6.2
Accessible small towns	28.1	22.8	5.3	1.8	41.1	2.9	7.2
Remote small towns	34.4	29.5	4.8	2.6	54.5	4.8	5.2
Accessible rural	21.3	16.7	4.7	0.2	33.3	3.5	4.4
Remote rural	16.7	13.3	3.4	0.6	29.8	3.6	1.8
Scotland	27.4	23.8	3.6	3.2	40.6	1.9	7.1

Of the child population 0–15 years old, 34.4 children per 100 population were registered with an early learning and childcare service in remote small towns (the highest), followed by 30.2 children registered in large urban areas (second highest), compared to 16.7 registered children in remote rural areas (the lowest).

Of the child population in accessible small towns, 5.3 children per 100 population were registered with childminders, compared with 2.2 children in large urban areas.

Of the child population 0–15 years old, 29.5 children per 100 population were registered with daycare of children services in remote small towns (the highest), followed by 28.1 children registered in large urban areas (second highest), compared to 13.3 children in remote rural areas (the lowest).

54.5 children per 100 population of the service specific population (0–5 years) were registered with a nursery in remote small towns, compared to 41.0 children in large urban areas and 29.8 children in remote rural areas. Remote small towns and other urban areas had the highest levels of children registered with local authority nurseries (29.5 and 24.7 children per 100 service specific population retrospectively), while large urban areas and accessible rural areas had the lowest rates of children registered with local authority nurseries (19.0 and 17.7 children per 100 service specific population retrospectively). Remote rural areas had the smallest rates of children aged 0–5 years old registered with private nurseries (5.9 children per 100 population), while remote small towns and large urban areas had the highest rates (19.1 and 18.7 children per 100 population 0–5 years old). This shows that there was no continuous trend throughout the urban – rural scale for children registered with nurseries by provider sector. See supporting data table 4b for more detailed information.

10.4 children per 100 population (4–15 years old) registered with an out of school care service in large urban areas, compared to 1.8 children per 100 population in remote rural areas.

There were some slight variations in the availability of high-quality services according to whether they were located in urban or rural areas, although there were no consistent trends (see tables 32a7 and 32a6). There was a higher density of high quality childminders in rural areas compared to urban areas. For daycare of children services as a whole, there was little difference between urban and rural areas. However, there were some differences by main service categories and provider sectors.

- Local authority nurseries were generally of better quality in urban areas and accessible small towns. In remote small towns and remote rural areas, a lower proportion of local authority nurseries were found to be very good or excellent for all themes when compared to the national average.
- Private nurseries seemed to be of better quality in small towns and accessible rural areas compared to urban areas and remote rural areas. However, for all areas other than the urban areas this is based on small numbers and needs to be interpreted with caution.
- Since there were small numbers of out of school care services in rural areas, any comparison of quality between urban and rural areas is not reliable.
- For playgroups, there was a higher proportion of high quality services in rural areas than in urban areas.

7.3 Scottish index of multiple deprivation (SIMD) areas (2012 SIMD)

There were differences in the number of childminders between the most and least deprived areas in Scotland. There were 21.1 and 38.3 childminders per 10,000 head of population (0 – 15 years old) in the 20% most deprived areas while there were 69.4 and 85.5 childminders per head of 10,000 population in the 20% least deprived areas.

The disparity in the overall number of daycare of children services between the most and least deprived areas was not as apparent as it was for childminders. There were 32.9 daycare of children services per 10,000 head of population (0 – 15 years old) in the 10% most deprived areas compared to 38.2 services per 10,000 head of population in the 10% least deprived areas (see supporting data table 16).

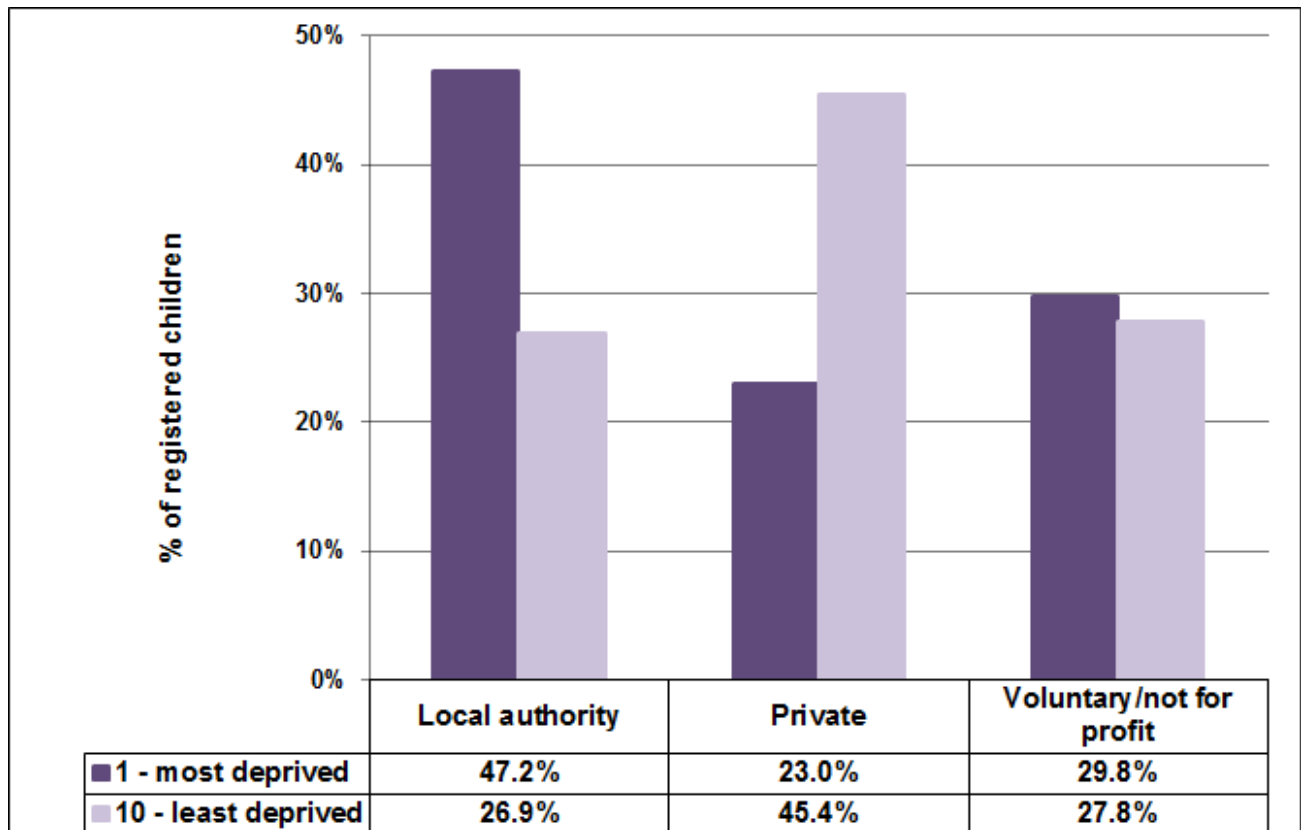
There was a difference in the nursery provision by sector in areas with different levels of deprivation. The areas in the 30% least deprived categories had the lowest proportion of local authority nurseries, but the highest proportions of private nurseries (see supporting data table 15b). In terms of deprivation, there was no clear correlation between average nursery size by provider sector and level of deprivation.

There were some differences in the number of children registered with services per 100 age specific population in areas with different levels of deprivation. However the correlation between level of deprivation and rate of children registered was not strong overall or for most categories. In addition, this analysis uses the population of the area in which the service is based – in other words it assumes that children use services close to where they live and do not travel to services outwith that area. Therefore, these findings should be used with caution.

The strongest correlations between level of deprivation and rate of children registered were for childminders and playgroups. There were lower proportions of children registered with childminders or playgroups in the most deprived areas than in the least deprived areas.

Although overall there was not a strong correlation between level of deprivation and rate of children registered with nurseries, there was a close correlation for private nurseries where the most deprived areas had the lowest rates of children registered with private nurseries (9.5 children registered per 100 population 0–5 years old) and the 30% least deprived areas had the highest rates of children aged 0–5 years old registered with private nurseries (20–25 per 100 population in each decile). See supporting data table 4b for more detailed information.

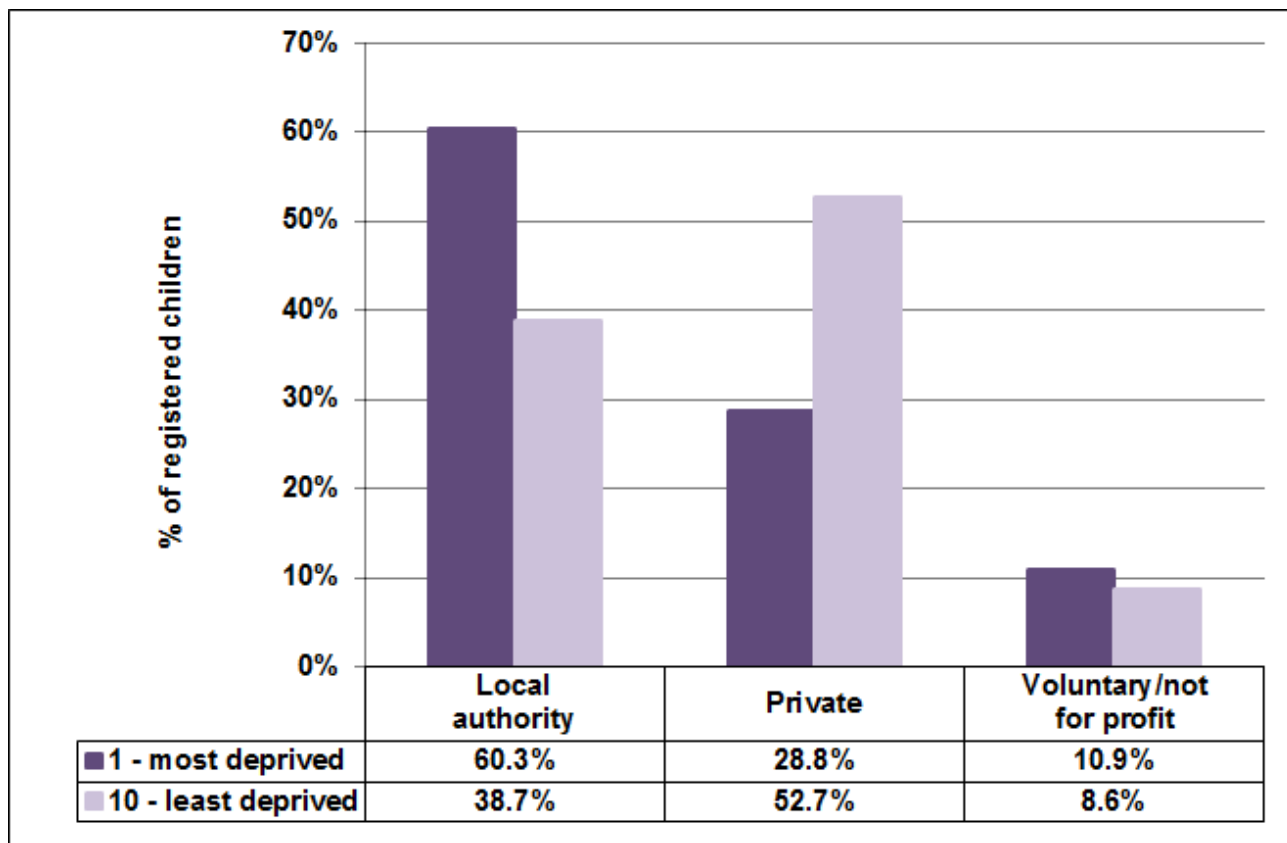
Figure 9
Proportion of active registered daycare of children services by sector and deprivation category as at 31 December 2015



There were differences between daycare of children services and the sectors they are run by in the most and least deprived areas. Local authorities provided the largest share of daycare of children in the most deprived areas, while the private sector provided the largest share in the least deprived areas. The proportion of voluntary/not for profit daycare of children services was similar in both the most and least deprived areas (figure 9). These differences could also be seen in the distribution of nurseries by provider sector and level of deprivation (figure 10).

Figure 10

Proportion of active registered nursery services by sector and deprivation category as at 31 December 2015



There were some differences in the availability of high-quality services across the different levels of deprivation, with greater differences in childminders than in daycare of children services. Due to the very small numbers of very poor quality services (found to be weak or unsatisfactory across all quality themes) the data provided in the supporting tables should be interpreted with caution.

The strongest link between levels of deprivation and availability of high-quality services was for childminders. The proportion of childminders found to be very good or excellent across all themes increased as the level of deprivation decreased. Of childminders in the most deprived areas, 28.8% were found to be very good or excellent, compared to 55.2% in the least deprived areas (see supporting table 32a6).

At the extremes of the scale, there were lower proportions of daycare of children services found to be very good or excellent in the most deprived areas than those in the least deprived areas (35.8% compared to 42.1%). However, the differences were not as big as in childminders and there was not a strong correlation across the scale of deprivation, with some of the more deprived areas having higher levels of higher quality services than the least deprived areas (see supporting table 32a7).

Although there were some slight differences evident between the quality of nurseries (local authority as well as private) by level of deprivation, there was not a strong statistical correlation between quality of nurseries and level of deprivation. While the difference between 26.0% of overall very good or excellent private nurseries in the most deprived areas and 46.7% in the least deprived areas appears to be large, this relates to a small number of services in the most deprived areas and there is no relationship throughout the scale for the other levels of deprivation.

8. Service provision

8.1 Provision for different age groups

More than 90% of childminders could provide care for children of one or more age groups between 2 and 11 years old. Almost 80% of childminders were able to look after 1 year old children and 70.3% were able to look after 6 – 12 months old children. The percentage of childminders able to cater for children of 12 years and over was 59.9%. Of the total of 5,530 active childminders, there were 1,680 services that could look after children of all age groups.

Of all the nurseries that could provide care to children under the age of 3, most were private nurseries. More than 50% of private nurseries could cater for children younger than 1 year old, more than 80% could provide care for 1 year old children and more than 90% could provide care for 2 year old children. In comparison only 20.4% of local authority nurseries could cater for 2 year old children (see supporting table 26b).

Of children under the age of 1, 8.4 children per 100 population were registered with an early learning and childcare service, with private nurseries, creches and childminders being the most used types of provision with parents. For 1 year olds, the rate of the child population registered with a service rises considerably to 33.6 children per 100 population, with private nurseries and childminders being the most used by parents. For 2 year olds, the rates of the child population registered with a service rises to 55.1 children per 100 population (see supporting data table 1a). Private nurseries had the highest proportion of 2 year olds registered at 24.0 children per 100 population, with 7.5 children per 100 population registered with childminders, 5.3 children per 100 population with crèches, 4.4 with playgroups, 4.2 with children and family centres and 3.2 with voluntary/not for profit nurseries.

Overall, around one-third of the 2 year old children in Scotland were registered with a nursery service. 24.0 children per 100 population were registered with a private nursery, 5.7 with a local authority nursery and 3.2 were registered with a voluntary/not for profit nursery. In comparison, almost half of all 3 year old children and 69.2 of all 4 year old children in Scotland were registered with a local authority nursery (see supporting data table 1b).

8.2 Languages and service philosophies

Excluding childminders, 99.4% (3720) of early learning and childcare services delivered their service in English, the same level as in 2014; 1.6% (62 services) provided their service in a mix of English and Gaelic or in Gaelic only; 1.5% of services (57) could offer their service in British sign language; and 1.4% of services (52) could provide the service in another language, most commonly Polish, Spanish, Punjab and Urdu, as well as communication languages such as Makaton and sign-along.

For the first time in 2015, information was gathered about services that used the forest approach. There were 194 services (5.2%) services using this approach. Services using the forest approach include outdoor-based services, and describe themselves as specialist outdoor services or services where children spend the majority of time outdoors. Around 9% of children and family centres (13 services) and 6.4% of nurseries (156 services) used the forest approach. See supporting data table 27 for further information.

Around 2% (79) daycare of children services followed a Suzuki/Montessori philosophy, which was an increase since 2014. This increase however is likely to be due to a change in the way this question was asked in the Annual Return and therefore cannot be compared directly with previous years.

8.3 School term / holiday availability

In term time:

- 55.1% of early learning and childcare services offered a breakfast or service before school time. This is lower than in previous years. However, the way in which the data was collected has changed slightly, which means the information cannot be compared directly with previous years.
- 80.0% of services provided care after school hours. This was a slight increase from 76.8% in 2014. The proportion of nurseries providing care after school hours has increased from 41.5% to 46.4%.
- The proportions of services providing late evening (9.4% of services), overnight stays (1.3%) and weekend provision (5.1%) have decreased slightly from the previous year. While the decrease can be seen across all service types, it is mainly childminders that provide this level of flexible childcare.

During school holidays:

- 42.2% of early learning and childcare services operated before 8am during school holidays.
- 72.8% of services operated during core hours throughout holidays. This was a slight increase from last year. There was a slight increase in the proportion of nurseries providing a service during the school holidays, with 34.0% this year compared to 32.7% last year. Only 6.2% of playgroups and 6.8% of local authority nurseries operate during school holidays, while 93.1% of childminders, 82.6% of private nurseries, 80.3% of children and family centres and 68.3% of out of school care operate during school holidays.
- Holiday playschemes and childminders had the highest levels of provision during the school holidays (see supporting tables 28a and 29b for more detailed information).

8.4 Sessions available and whether drop-in or planned

It is noticeable that there were some changes in terms of flexibility of opening times with an increase in daycare of children services (nurseries in particular) providing the option for full-day and not solely part-day sessions. Of daycare of children services, 47.7% offered both full-day or part-day sessions. This increased from 44.0% in 2013 and 45.7% last year. For the first time, more nurseries overall were offering the option for full-day sessions than those providing part-day sessions only (51.1% vs. 48.9%). See supporting data tables 29a and 29b for further information.

Of private nurseries, 93.9% provided both full-day and part-day attendance, compared to 25.2% in local authority nurseries and 57.1% in voluntary/not for profit nurseries. Of local authority nurseries, 73.4% offered a part-day service only. This has decreased from 79.1% in 2014, while the option for full- or part-day attendance has increased from 20.5% to 25.2%. Only 3.8% of private nurseries offered a part-day only service. 40.0% of voluntary/not for profit nurseries offered a part-day only service which is a similar proportion as in 2014. Only a very small number of nurseries provided full-day sessions only (1.6%) and 92.6% of playgroups offer a part-day only service.

A higher flexibility in private nurseries could also be seen in terms of additional services being provided. More than half of the nurseries providing additional services (52.0%) were privately run services. Additional services provided were such as breakfast clubs, holiday playschemes or out of school care. The majority of those nurseries not providing additional services were local authority nurseries (66.5%). See supporting data table 13a for further information.

Excluding crèche services, almost all services were available on a planned, rather than drop-in, basis.

8.5 Provision of meals and snacks

The percentage of childminders providing meals in the service was 92.3%, a slight decrease from 93.8% in 2014. The meals were provided either by the service (21.4%), by parents only (48.7%) or by both (22.2%). 98.5% of childminders provided snacks for the children in the services.

Around 40.9% of daycare of children services provided meals in the service (whether by the service, parents or both), slightly higher than in 2014 (38.9%). The provision of meals varied between different types of daycare services. It ranged from 16.7% in out of school care services to 49.0% in nurseries and 71.4% in children and family centres.

Around one-quarter of local authority nurseries provided meals in the service, while 94.7% of private and 62.9% of voluntary/not for profit nurseries provided meals (whether by the service, parents or both). These were similar proportions to the nurseries offering full-day sessions and meals might not be required where children only attend for part of the day.

Of private nurseries, 54.6% offered meals provided solely by the service. This compares to 36.1% of children and family centres, 22.9% of voluntary/not for profit nurseries, 21.4% of childminders and 11.6% of local authority nurseries offering meals provided solely by the service.



Technical appendix

Background and methodology

The Care Inspectorate regulates care services for children and adults in Scotland. This includes a wide range of services for children and young people, such as fostering, adoption and residential care. This publication focuses on childminding and daycare of children services, collectively known as early learning and childcare services in this report. Statistics on, for example, looked after children are published by the Scottish Government and can be found at:

www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Children/Publications.

- This paper reports on the provision and use of daycare of children services and childminders registered with the Care Inspectorate as at 31 December 2015. Each daycare of children service can provide a range of different types of provision, for example a nursery can also provide a breakfast club and out of school care. In this report we have only used the main type of provision so a service that provides a nursery as main provision but also provides out of school care, will only be recorded as a nursery. This may lead to under-reporting of the availability of some types of provision.
- Previous versions of this report, which were published to cover the years 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014 are available at <http://www.careinspectorate.com/index.php/publications-statistics/19-public/statistics>.
- The statistics in this report are produced using information from the latest Care Inspectorate annual returns which asked for information about the previous calendar year (1 January 2015 to 31 December 2015) and the Care Inspectorate service list (as at 31 December 2015). Figures relating to previous years are taken from the Childcare Statistics 2010, 2011 2012, 2013 and 2014 publications.
- Our inspectors use the annual returns when planning care service inspections and carrying out risk assessments. Some of the information in the return is also aggregated and used by the Care Inspectorate to inform wider statistical analysis and comparisons across, for example, care service providers and geographical areas.
- The Care Inspectorate requires (under the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010, section 53(6)) all providers that are registered with the Care Inspectorate to complete and submit an annual return in order to provide the Care Inspectorate with the information needed to help plan and carry out inspections effectively. Although services registered after 1 October 2015 do not have to submit an annual return for December 2015, we encourage them to do so.
- Of the 9,726 childcare services registered with the Care Inspectorate as at 31 December 2015, 8,453 (87%) submitted an annual return, a 1% decrease compared to the previous year. The annual return data has been weighted to deal with non-response. For this reason, some of the tables contain figures that have been rounded to the nearest 10; therefore rounded figures may differ slightly to the overall totals.

Please note that where a table contains percentages, those that are based on numbers equal to or smaller than 10 are shown in colour.

Data sources

Care Inspectorate service list (as at 31 December 2015) has been used to provide figures on:

- the total number of registered 'daycare of children' and 'childminding' services
- whether services were active or inactive
- whether services were run by public, private or voluntary/not for profit providers
- the registered capacity of each service (that is the total number of children that can be cared for at any one time)
- the postcode of the service, from which we have derived the local authority, deprivation category and urban-rural category of the service.

Care Inspectorate annual returns (as at 31 December 2015) have been used to provide estimates for:

- the main service type, for example nursery, playgroup, out of school care and so on
- the number of children registered with the service as at 31 December 2015
- whether daycare of children services provide funded places as at 31 December 2015
- the number of children registered that receive early learning and childcare funding as at 31 December 2015
- the number of children registered in daycare of children services that use the services for out of school care as at 31 December 2015
- the age groups catered for and term-time/holiday-time availability of the service
- whether the service was available drop-in or planned and full-day or part-day
- whether meals or snacks were provided by the service or by the parents
- the languages and service philosophies used by services
- characteristics of childminders.

The **2012 Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD)** has been used to assign deprivation levels based on the postcode location of each childcare service. The SIMD does not reflect the locations where children using services live.

Further information about the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation is available here:

www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/SIMD

Scottish Government **urban/rural categories** have been used to assign an urban/rural category to the postcode location of each childcare service. The urban/rural categories do not reflect the locations where children using services live.

Further information about the Scottish Government Urban Rural Classification is available here:

www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/About/Methodology/UrbanRuralClassification.

The National Records of Scotland mid-year population estimates have been used to calculate rates.

Further information about the population estimates is available here:

<http://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/statistics-and-data/statistics/statistics-by-theme/population/population-estimates>

The following population estimates have been used in this publication:

<http://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/statistics-and-data/statistics/statistics-by-theme/population/population-estimates/special-area-population-estimates/population-estimates-by-simd-2012>

<http://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/statistics-and-data/statistics/statistics-by-theme/population/population-estimates/special-area-population-estimates/population-estimates-by-urban-rural-classification>

Data cleaning and dealing with missing data

Where there have been any data-input errors or incomplete responses identified in relation to specific questions, these have been fixed where possible before any analysis has taken place. For example, where a service's status was 'active' as at 31 December 2015 but the service reported working zero hours and recorded zero number of users the status was changed to 'inactive' before any analysis has taken place (for this reason the count of active childminders published in this report differs from that published by the Scottish Social Services Council in their Workforce Data report).

Not all childcare services have submitted an annual return. This means that there are some gaps in the data that we need to take account of.

Summary of annual return response rates at December 2015

Main service	Response rate at December 2015
Childminding	82%
Children and family centre	99%
Crèche	96%
Holiday playscheme	85%
Nursery	94%
Out of school care	95%
Playgroup	94%
Other services	90%
All services	87%
All services (excl. childminding services)	94%

For dealing with missing data, the following approach has been taken:

A. Identification of under-representation in annual return responses

Within the responses of annual returns, it may be possible that some types of services are less likely to respond than other types of services. If this isn't adjusted then the final results would likely be biased towards the characteristics of services that had responded and therefore not representative of the entire set of registered services.

Logistic regression⁵ has been used to help establish specific characteristics of services that appeared to be significant factors in terms of the likelihood of non-response to an annual return. Over and above the main service category being a factor in response rates, the other factors for December 2015 annual returns are summarised in the table on the next page.

⁵Logistic regression is a type of statistical analysis used for predicting the outcome of a categorical variable based on one or more other variables.

Service category	Factors associated with non-response to annual returns
Childminding	Level of deprivation of service location Capacity of service (number of children that can be cared for at any one time) Grades of service
Children and family centre	None
Crèche	None
Holiday playscheme	None
Nursery	Urban/rural category Capacity of service Whether the service was registered in the most current year
Nursery providing additional childcare	Whether the service was registered in the most current year
Out of school care	Whether the service was registered in the most current year
Out of school care providing additional childcare	None
Playgroup	None
Other services	None

Note: these are factors in addition to the main service category (which is also a significant factor in determining likelihood of a response). Factors for previous years of annual return data are similar and further details are available on request.

B. Weighting and grossing up data to obtain overall estimates

Weights were calculated for the significant factors associated with non-response. This is so we could adjust for the types of services that we knew were underrepresented by a certain level in the annual return responses. We then applied the weights to each type of service in grossing-up⁶ the annual return data rather than simply grossing-up evenly across all services. This has produced final estimates which should be more representative of the overall mix of different types of registered services.

C. Testing the impact of using weighted data

To help assess the impact of applying weights to the annual return data, some of the final results have been compared to estimates obtained from simply grossing up without weights (that is ignoring any potential underrepresentation).

For the number of children registered with childminders at 31 December 2015, the weighted results (as used in the publication tables) produce an estimate of 32,660. This is higher than the non-weighted and non-grossed up figure of 28,440.

⁶Grossing-up is the process of multiplying values (such as the number of children attending a service, or the number of childminders with a qualification) equally by a factor between 1.0 and 1.9 to account for services that did not submit an annual return. Weighted grossing-up is the process of multiplying values by a factor that varies depending on the combined characteristics of the service to which the value belongs.

For early learning and childcare services excluding childminding and crèche services, the weighted results (as used in the publication tables) produce an estimate of 216,740 children registered with daycare of children services. This is higher than the non-weighted grossed up figure of 166,070.

New data items collected in 2015

Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) funded children and school aged children using care services

In 2015, we collected data for the first time on children registered with care services that receive ELC funding as well as data on children that use care services for out of school care. Both sets of data were collected by children's ages (for applicable ages). Since August 2014, all children aged 3 and 4 years and some eligible 2 year olds are entitled to 600 hours of free early learning and childcare. Additionally, a local authority may choose to fund a child (of any age) on a discretionary basis for early learning and childcare. The information on school aged children's use of childcare is important information used by the Scottish Government and the Scottish Out of School Network to assist with policy development of out of school care.

Due to both sets of data being collected for the first time, there are some uncertainties regarding the data quality. Therefore, this information is published as a set of 'trial stats'. Unlike other data items, the number of ELC funded children and the number of children using care services for out of school care are not weighted to account for non-submissions and only the data actually submitted in the annual return is displayed. This means that the figures reported are most likely an underestimate of the true figures.

Due to data quality issues, the ELC funded children are not reported for childminders. The out of school care information was only collected for daycare of children services and not for childminders in 2015, but will be collected for childminders in 2016.

Children under 1 year old registered with care services

In 2015, we collected more specific data on children under 1 year old. This means that we asked services to record the number of children registered with the service that are under 3 months of age, between 3 and 6 months of age and those aged 6-12 months. Under the Children and Young Person's (Scotland) Act (2014), the Scottish Government introduced a range of policies aimed at reducing inequality and improving the lives of all children and young people in Scotland. While the main focus has been on increasing the availability of funded places for children aged 2, 3 and 4 years, other initiatives recognise the importance of providing support as early as possible, including pregnancy and very young children. Alongside Scottish Government's increasing support for early intervention, the 'Putting the Baby IN the Bath Water' coalition has also focused attention on the wellbeing and care of very young children. As part of this, we have decided to include more specific statistics and analysis regarding the care of babies in registered settings.

Forest approach in daycare of children services

In 2015, as part of the questions regarding specific philosophies that services use in their childcare, we asked for the first time whether services use the forest approach. Since registering the UK's first full-time forest nursery, the Care Inspectorate has welcomed the increasing number of new outdoor-based services being registered (and existing services becoming outdoor-based), which have expanded to include voluntary sector playgroups, local authority nurseries and out of school clubs, as well as independent nurseries. We define an outdoor-based service as one that describes itself as a

specialist outdoor service and where children spend the majority of time outdoors. Scotland is at the forefront of the current growth of forest nurseries in the UK, which are based completely outdoors with children being fully immersed in a natural setting. The Secret Garden in Fife was registered as the UK's first full-time forest nursery in 2008 and since then we have seen these high-quality services become more popular across Scotland.

Early morning childcare

The question in the annual return asking whether care is provided before school hours was changed from 'Breakfast or pre-school' to 'Breakfast or before school hours'. With the change in definition the number of services that ticked this option is very different from previous years and therefore cannot be compared with previous years.

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Links to other related statistics

Scottish Government Pre-School Education Statistics
<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Children/Pubs-Pre-SchoolEducation>

Scottish Social Services Council statistics on the Social Services Workforce
<http://data.sssc.uk.com/data-publications/22-workforce-data-report/128-scottish-social-service-sector-report-on-2015-workforce-data>

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Publication code: IM-1116-007

Illustrations designed by Freepik.com