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Reinstatement of Statutory Entitlement and Covid Financial Support

To all registered childcare providers

Following the [joint statement from Minister for Children and Young People and COSLA](#) on 14 December 2020 in relation to all eligible children benefiting from 1140 hours of funded early learning and childcare by August 2021, the legislation to reinstate the duty has today been laid in the Scottish Parliament for its [consideration](#).

This legislation places a duty on education authorities to make available 1140 hours of funded ELC to all eligible children from August 2021.

This legislation reconfirms the Scottish Government's ambition for every single one of Scotland's children to grow up in a country where they feel loved, safe and respected, and able to reach their full potential. It is this ambition that is at the heart of the Scottish Government's commitment to expanding the funded ELC entitlement. This will help secure positive outcomes for children across Scotland.

At the end of March we took the difficult decision to pause the 1,140 hours expansion programme to allow local authorities to focus on our immediate response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, throughout the pandemic, local authorities and ELC providers have continued to work extremely hard to progress the expansion and ensure as many families as possible can benefit ahead of statutory implementation.

We look forward to working with the Scotland-wide Team ELC in 2021 to deliver the expansion by August. Collectively we can now focus on realising the transformational benefits the expansion will bring, including improved educational and development outcomes for children, enhanced family wellbeing and greater employment and training opportunities for parents and carers.

Temporary Restrictions Fund for Childcare Providers

We have published [further information](#) on the Temporary Restrictions Fund for Childcare Providers, which will support services who [are currently only permitted](#) to operate for vulnerable children or those of key workers.

This includes day care of children's services operating at any registered capacity; childminders who currently care for 12 or more children; and, out of school care providers.

We have set out further details on the level of grants that will be available to providers and the eligibility criteria for the Fund.

Providers will need to confirm each of the weeks within the restrictions period that they were open to deliver childcare to children of key workers and vulnerable children.

Services will need to have been open in each week of the 4 week period to receive the full grant for each 4 week restrictions period. Where services were only open for part of the restrictions period then grants will be awarded on a pro-rata basis and calculated based on the number of weeks open.

Further details will be provided as more information becomes available, including confirmation of the date on which applications can be made.

Dedicated Support for Childminders

The vast majority of childminders (other than those caring for 12 or more children) are not subject to the same temporary restrictions as day care of children providers and are currently able to remain open, if they choose to do so, to all children.

Childminders caring for 12 or more children are eligible for the Temporary Restrictions Fund as set out above.

However, we are aware that many childminders of all sizes continue to encounter challenges and that some may experience a drop in demand for their services despite being able to remain open.

That is why we have made [funding of £1 million available for childminders](#) who have been financially impacted by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Grants of between £500 and £1,000 each will be made to eligible childminding providers and work is now underway with the Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA) to finalise the details of the scheme, and further information on how to apply will be published shortly.

Business support

Guidance on financial support currently available can be found in the updated Supplementary Guidance. This highlights that we have agreed with local government that the payments for funded ELC should continue during the period of additional restrictions, even for those children who are not able to attend, to ensure that local ELC capacity is retained to ensure sustainability for the future delivery of ELC.

We would encourage you to keep in touch with your representative body and /or the [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): support to childcare sector - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#) to find out what support you can access just now. This includes information on and links to available support schemes, such as the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and the Self-Employed Income Support Scheme.

Parents and Families

We would encourage any parent or family wishing to keep in touch with developments to visit our [guide to childcare](#) on the Parent Club website. This includes access to frequently asked questions about registered childcare and informal childcare, as well as other information that they may find helpful. This is updated as new information becomes available and now reflects the changes made in the supplementary guidance.

Thank you again for everything you do for Scotland's children and families, particularly as we continue to adapt and adjust our response to the extraordinary needs brought about by this global pandemic.

Alison Cumming
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