

ANGUS COUNCIL

FAMILY, EDUCATION AND JUSTICE COMMITTEE - 25 MARCH 2025

CHARGING FOR ADDITIONAL HOURS OF EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE

REPORT BY NEIL LOWDEN, ACTING DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING

1. ABSTRACT

- 1.1 This report seeks approval to extend the opportunity for parents and carers to pay for additional sessions of Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) to create further flexibility in Local Authority settings.

2. ALIGNMENT TO THE COUNCIL PLAN AND COUNCIL POLICIES

- 2.1 The proposals in this report align to:

Council Plan 2023-28

- Support children, young people and adults to access appropriate opportunities which allow them to progress in their learning.
- Deliver our statutory obligation and core functions, tailored to suit our available resources and making best use of our data and performance information.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Family, Education and Justice Committee:
- (i) approves the proposal, as detailed in Section 6 below, to enhance flexibility in the provision of Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) in Local Authority settings by allowing parents and carers the option to pay for additional provision, where operationally feasible, at no extra cost to the council; and
 - (ii) approves the proposal, as detailed in Section 6 below, to give delegated authority to the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning, in consultation with the Director of Finance, to set the rate for additional provision, in line with local market rates and the sustainable rate.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The legislative basis for providing funded ELC is found in two pieces of primary legislation: [The Education \(Scotland\) Act 1980](#) and [The Children and Young People \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#).
- 4.2 Reference is made to the Scottish Government's [Blueprint for 2020: Expansion of ELC in Scotland consultation](#) which highlights the Local Authority's need to respond to the needs of children and families through providing flexible options for ELC.
- 4.3 Reference is made to committee report [72/16](#) which outlines the previous arrangements for charging for additional hours beyond the then core 600 hours, in cases where no similar provision was available to parents and carers from partner providers.
- 4.4 Reference is made to a consultation undertaken in November 2023 aimed at evaluating whether ELC provision in Angus is meeting the ongoing needs of families, in accordance with the Scottish Government's [Blueprint for 2020: Expansion of ELC in Scotland consultation](#). The November 2023 consultation revealed an increasing appetite for flexibility within Local Authority ELCs. Of the 327 parents and carers who responded to the survey, 58% expressed interest in the option to pay for additional hours at the Local Authority ELC their child attends. The survey data also indicated that this option would offer continuity of care and greater flexibility for working parents and carers (report [163/24](#)).

- 4.5 Reference is made to committee report [163/24](#), which outlines the trial allowing parents and carers to pay £30 for one additional ELC session at the Carnoustie and Forfar ELC Centres respectively. It was agreed that the report on this initial trial would be presented to committee in May 2025. However, to enable parents and carers to benefit from this new flexibility when applying for their child's placement for August 2025, the report has been brought to the Committee ahead of the application opening period in April 2025.
- 4.6 Reference is made to committee report 379/24, exempt from publication.

5. CURRENT POSITION

- 5.1 Angus Council currently offers 1140 hours of funded ELC to children aged three to five years and eligible two-year-olds. This can be accessed in three stand-alone ELC settings, nursery classes in schools and in partner private, voluntary and childminder settings in contract with the council.
- 5.2 Parents and carers can purchase additional hours in private and voluntary settings and with childminders. They can also pay for one additional session per week in Carnoustie and Forfar ELC Centres at the cost of £30 per five-hour session (report [163/24](#)).
- 5.3 Currently, a small number of families have purchased additional sessions, generating an income of £2,500 to date. Although this is lower than the anticipated uptake of the offer, this income has been acquired at no additional cost to the Local Authority and has provided increased flexibility for families. Throughout the trial, contracts and payment systems have been established and refined to enable parents and carers to easily access additional ELC sessions. These systems will support an efficient further rollout, should this option be continued or expanded.
- 5.4 As part of a consultation exercise in October 2024, 78% of the 54 parents and carers from Forfar ELC and 79% of the 37 parents and carers from Carnoustie ELC centre participated in a survey regarding the potential extension of this service. The survey results showed that 97% believe £30 for a five-hour session is a fair price. Additionally, 67% indicated they would take advantage of the option to purchase multiple blocks of five-hour sessions, if it were available. Among those who currently attend term time from 9am to 3pm and wish to purchase additional hours, 40% would prefer to buy hours during the holidays, 19% before the session, and 40% after the session. Considered alongside the previous consultation with families in November 2023, this shows there is demand for greater flexibility in our ELC offer.
- 5.5 The proposed ELC session rate of £30 for one five-hour session, and £6.50 for individual hours purchased before or after the session for children who attend from 9am to 3pm, has been established in accordance with current local market rates. Additionally, these proposed session rates align with the sustainable rates currently paid to contracted providers, once the 'profit' element is excluded from the rate.

6. PROPOSALS

- 6.1 In light of the increased parental demand for additional paid provision of ELC through the introduction of 1140 hours of delivery, it is proposed that the Family, Education and Justice Committee approves a further extension of the opportunity for parents and carers to pay for additional ELC hours and sessions creating further flexibility in Local Authority settings. This proposal is limited to Delivery Model 3 (DM3) settings where staff are already in place to meet the required ratios for children attending from 8am to 6pm for 46 weeks per year. The provision of additional paid hours is not a statutory requirement and as such the Local Authority would reserve the right to provide or withdraw provision of hours subject to capacity. From August 2025 this would begin the three stand-alone settings, Carnoustie, Forfar ELC and Monifieth ELC Centres in response to parental requests for the option to pay for additional hours. If required, and following consultation with parents and carers, this could also be accommodated in the remaining DM3 settings which include Andover, Northmuir, Southesk and Warddykes Nurseries.
- 6.2 It is proposed that the Family, Education and Justice Committee agrees the charge of £30 for one five-hour session of ELC and £6.50 for individual hours purchased and delegates authority to the Director of Education to review and adjust these charges each April, as part of the budget setting process, in line with market rates and the sustainable rate. This proposal aligns with a previously agreed delegation, noted in Report 379/24.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 As highlighted in committee reports [72/16](#) and [163/24](#) the consideration of this provision must be balanced against potential increased staffing costs necessary to deliver a high-quality service to more children for extended hours. However, in Delivery Model 3 (DM3) settings, this additional flexibility can be accommodated at no extra cost to the council.
- 7.2 There is a potential of a financial benefit to the council if parents and carers purchase additional hours and sessions, for example, if five parents chose to purchase three additional session per week, this would generate an income of £450 per week and a maximum of £20,250 over the course of a full school year.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 8.1 This report contributes towards CORRR0002 – Transforming for the Future.

9. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no direct environmental implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

10. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT, HUMAN RIGHTS AND FAIRER SCOTLAND DUTY

- 10.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out and is attached.

11. CHILDREN'S RIGHTS AND WELLBEING IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 11.1 A Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment has been carried out within the EIA.

12. CONSULTATION

- 12.1 The Director of Finance and the Acting Director of Legal, Governance and Change have been consulted in the preparation of this report. In addition, the recommendations have been brought forward in response to previous consultation with parents and carers regarding ELC services.

NOTE: The background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) which were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above report are:

Report [72/16](#)
Report 379/24
Report [163/24](#)

[Blueprint for 2020: Expansion of ELC in Scotland consultation](#)
[The Children and Young People \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#)
[The Education \(Scotland\) Act 1980](#)

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List of Appendices:

Equality Impact Assessment