

General Information

1. What is Early Learning and Childcare (EL&C)

Answer: This is a generic term introduced in the Children & Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. It emphasises that the care and learning of children in the early years are not two separate things, with babies and young children learning all the time from all of their experiences. This is very much part of their learning journey towards beginning statutory education in Primary school.

2. What is changing for Early Learning and Childcare generally?

Answer: The provision of Early Learning and Childcare (EL&C) across Scotland is changing. From August 2020 all three and four year olds and eligible two year olds (around 27%) will be entitled to 1140 hours of funded EL&C provision per year, this almost doubles the current provision of 600 hours.

3. When will we be able to take up these additional funded hours?

Answer: The entitlement does not become a statutory requirement until August 2020. However, to make it more manageable, the Scottish Government has funded all Local Authorities in Scotland to offer some Trials and 'Phase in' the expansion of hours rather than wait until August 2020 for everything to begin. In East Lothian we started with some trials then moved onto to phasing, which will continue from now until full implementation for August 2020.

4. Where will I be able to take up the extended hours?

Answer: By August 2020 as well as Local Authority Nurseries, you will be able to take up the 1140 hours with Childminders, Community Play Groups and Day Nurseries who have chosen to enter into partnership with the Local Authority and meet the National Standard requirements.

5. How will I be able to take up the 1140 hours?

Answer: To enable more choice and flexibility the expansion of hours will be offered in a variety of ways by different types of providers. The following are just a few ways which are being considered.

Where there is capacity of places and spaces to do so, some Local Authority Nurseries may move away from a 'sessional' a.m. / p.m. model during term time (38 weeks) to offer an Extended day or Asymmetric week to mirror the school day as shown below. **Please Note: the times below are for example purposes only.**

Extended Day	30 hours per week	5 Days per week Mon - Friday	6 hours per day	09.00 – 15.00	38 weeks Term Time
Asymmetric Week	30 hours per week	4 days Mon - Thursday	6 ½ hours per day	08.30 – 15.00	38 weeks Term Time
		Half day –a.m. only Friday	4 hours	08.30 – 12.30	

For some Local Authority Nurseries where it is not possible to offer the extended hours over 38 weeks term time, an extended week model over 50 weeks (closed during Christmas and New Year) or a 46 week model, which will not include public holidays or in-service days will be offered.

The latter is likely to include the option of **four weeks over summer as well as October, February and Easter** school holiday periods. Ultimately the week of opening will be determined through consultation with the school management, staff and parents.

Additionally, it will be possible to use more than one funded provider as a 'blended model', e.g. a child with a childminder early morning who then takes the child to nursery, picking them up at lunch time or later in the day. The child spending the morning in the community playgroup and then going along to nursery in the afternoon. However, only those who are "funded providers" with the Local Authority will be able to offer "blended models". Funded providers are likely to offer a more flexible service which better suit the needs of some parents.

6. How long will a trial last for?

Answer: During the initial introductory stages the term 'trial' was used when referring to the expansion of hours. However, this gives the impression that this is 'temporary' and will only be available for a certain time period and cease on a specific date, which isn't the case, therefore to avoid confusion we are moving away from using this.

We are phasing in the hours but trialling the systems and processes of how extended hours can work in different settings and parents can see how the hours work in practice. Once a setting offers the expansion of hours they will continue, to do so. Although it may be that as we move towards statutory implementation in August 2020, some of the operating times may be adjusted to reflect the pattern of hours and weeks being used consistently.

7. How have settings been chosen?

Answer: Initial trials in Prestonpans and Tranent were identified from Local Authority provision using areas the Scottish Indices of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) which reflected the guidance from Scottish Government. This has expanded to be able offer a variety of delivery models within geographical cluster areas, where there is the potential within provision capacity and staffing to offer the expanded hours. This will enable a spread across East Lothian rather than a concentration in one specific geographical area.

8. Is it only school nurseries being phased in to offer the expansion of hours?

Answer: No - we have a wide range of provision types offering the additional hours across East Lothian. Some local private day nurseries who are current funded partners as well as those Childminders who have chosen to offer the funded Early Learning and Childcare as part of their business model are offering additional funded hours either in full or as part of a blended model. We hope that the number of funded providers will increase over the coming year, as we work with Community Playgroups who are looking to develop their operating model to include the offer of funded Early Learning and Childcare.

9. Are all school nurseries phasing in the models?

Answer: The plan is to phase in the hours in a number of Local Authority Nurseries at various points during the Academic Year 2019/2020. The expansion phasing will take account of the nursery admissions process and staffing. Target dates for school nurseries are in line with the beginning of each new term in August, October, January and following the Easter break.

This pattern will be followed until the completion of the roll out. Timescale for implementation will vary from nursery to nursery, this is to ensure that staffing models are taken into account and that consultation and discussion with nursery management, staff teams and parents take place prior to models being implemented.

10. What is the process to begin offering a model?

For each school entering the extended hours programme an initial meeting and discussion with school management and staff teams takes place. Following this, an information session for parents is held locally, where the school and LA Officers will talk through the suggested model, and answer any questions and queries parents may have. Parents will receive an options form to complete noting their preferred take-up pattern or model option from choices given, and to return the sheet as advised. Feedback on preferred options will then be included within the nursery placement offer letters for parents to confirm their acceptance of their child's nursery place.

11. Will all children be offered extended / additional hours as part of the phasing?

Answer: The aim is to enable all children in a phased in provision access to the 1140 hours. In the early phase the number of places available was limited with those places being offered to families who met the specific criteria. The phasing for 2019/2020 aims to offer all children the opportunity to access additional hours when there is the space and capacity to do so.

A decision will be made during the initial discussion with the school management team taking into consideration the registered space and capacity, current staffing arrangements and admission applications/enrolment numbers for each individual trial. This will be shared with parents during the initial information sessions and as the hours are introduced. Additionally, take up of hours and places will be monitored throughout the academic year to highlighting where take up of hours is not in line with the chosen options and enable accurate reporting of the programme to local and central government.

12. What does it mean to be part of the phasing?

Answer: If your child is eligible as a 2, 3 or 4 year old they can receive up to 1140 hours (for a full academic year) of funded Early Learning & Childcare a year instead of the current 600 hours. For children starting part way through the year the hours will be pro-rata for that year. As part of the extended hours you child will also be entitled to receive a meal at no cost to yourself. A meal can be a breakfast/ substantial mid-morning or afternoon snack/Lunch /Tea. This will vary depending on how the hours are being offered and likely to vary across providers.

As part of the expansion phase you will be asked for feedback on how the additional hours are benefitting your child, you and your family as a whole. You will also be asked to comment on what, from your point of view is working well and, if anything could be improved. All of which provides learning to help us as we introduce the extended hours in other areas within East Lothian.

13. Do I have to take up these additional hours?

Answer: No - models and hours of operation will enable flexibility, which means that parents who wish to take up 600 hours will be able to do so. You can take up *as much* or *as little* of the entitled hours as you wish within the model offered, it is not either 600 or 1140 hours, it can be somewhere in between, within the minimum and maximum of hours in any one day.

14. What is the maximum hours I can take in any one day?

Answer: Current legislation for the 600 hours states a minimum of 2 ½ hours and maximum of 8 hours in any one day. However, for the expansion to 1140 hours there is likely to be a

legislative change to remove the minimum and increase the maximum to 10 hours in any one day. Whilst we await these changes we are exploring the potential to introduce a minimum of one hour and a maximum of 10 hours in any one day framework.

15. What do I need to do?

Answer: Attend any information sessions when offered the opportunity to do so, ask any questions you may have, especially those you feel are specific to you. Complete and return the questionnaire about 1140 hours when it is given to you, this makes sure that we know your preferences, and that we have your input.

Think about what the additional hours will mean for your child and your family circumstances. If you already have childcare in place, talk through the expansion of hours with your current provider, in particular how they intend to offer the increase in hours.

Whilst all private nurseries and a limited number of childminders are already “Funded Providers”, others such as community groups (Playgroups) have still to start on this journey. If you currently use a childminder or community group and wish to continue with this arrangement please ask if they have noted an interest in becoming a funded provider.