

Early learning and childcare statistics 2017

The provision and use of registered daycare of
children and childminding services in
Scotland as at 31 December 2017

Published November 2018



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Introduction

The number of children registered with childminders and daycare of children services is growing and this is a period of unprecedented expansion of funded early learning and childcare (ELC).

By law, ELC services must be registered with the Care Inspectorate in order to operate, and we have a statutory duty to further improvements in those services. As Scotland's independent scrutiny and improvement body, we regulate these services and carry out regular inspections to ensure children experience safe, high-quality care that helps them to achieve the best outcomes. Our new Health and Social Care Standards set out in clear outcomes-based statements what children should experience in care services in Scotland. In the course of our regulation, we collect important data and intelligence about these services.

This report has been prepared to provide a national overview of the provision and use of childminders and daycare of children services registered with the Care Inspectorate in 2017. It presents statistical analysis focused on key themes arising from this powerful evidence base, including the numbers of registered services and children enrolled with them, capacity within these services, the number of services providing funded places, information on complaints that were investigated and analysis of grading data.

During our regular inspections, we assess quality themes that cover the main areas of a service's work and each theme is evaluated using a six-point scale. The scrutiny evidence presented here shows the quality of services in 2017 remained high overall and the proportion of services found to be good or better for all quality themes had increased slightly compared to 2016.

The proportion of childminders and daycare of children services with all quality themes found to be weak or unsatisfactory remained very low. For those services that are not providing the care and support that we would like to see, the Care Inspectorate can provide additional support to ensure the quality of care improves. Where a service does not make improvements that we require we can, and do, use a wide range of powers to ensure this happens including legal action if necessary.

The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 has significantly expanded funded ELC. The current statutory funded entitlement for all children aged three and four (and eligible two-year-olds) is 600 hours. This funded entitlement will increase further to 1,140 hours for those children by 2020.

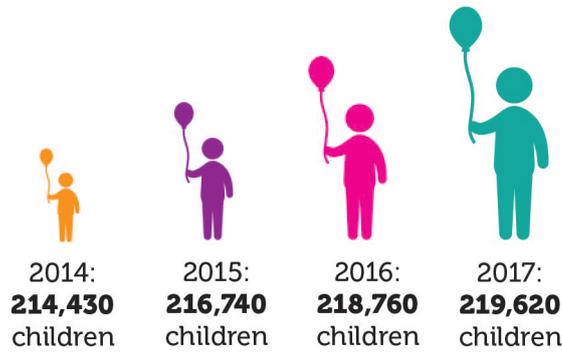
At this time of major expansion, we hope this statistical information is helpful for planners, commissioners and policy-makers. The intelligence gathered here will also inform our future scrutiny and improvement work.

We are committed to ensuring that the quality of care provided offers children the best outcomes. We appreciate and recognise the important and valuable work that staff in the ELC sector do every day. I would also like to thank our inspectors for their exemplary hard work, commitment, dedication and passion to improve the quality of care in Scotland's ELC sector.

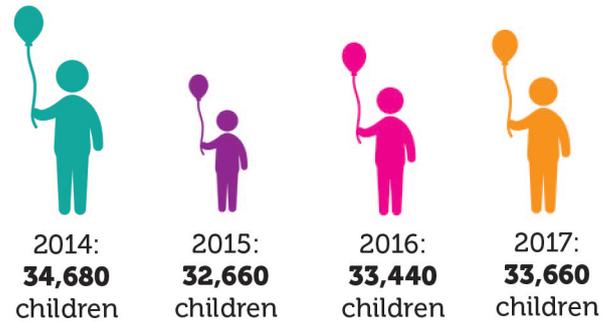
Gordon Weir
Interim Chief Executive

Key points

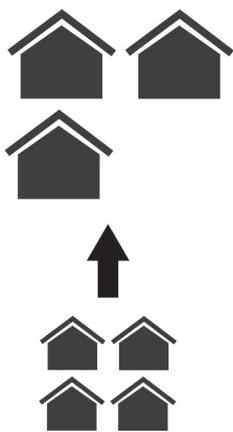
Increase in children registered with daycare of children services



Overall, there was a decrease in children registered with childminding services, but an increase in 2016 compared to 2015



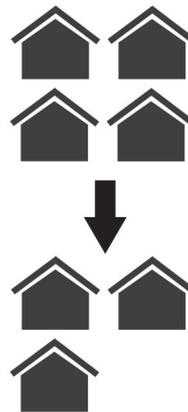
2014-17



Slight decrease in number of daycare of children services from **3,757** to **3,701** services between 2014 and 2017

Services are getting bigger, average is up from **41.9** to **44.9** children

Total number of registered places (capacity) up from **157,450** to **166,260**



Decrease in number of childminding services (**6,102** to **5,426** = **-11.1%**)

Average capacity of childminders has increased from **5.6** places to **6.2** places per services

Total number of registered places (capacity) down from **34,430** to **33,611**.

More daycare of children services provide funded places in 2017 compared to 2014



Flexibility in daycare of children opening times increased, part or whole days:

Choice of part or whole day sessions offered



Only part day sessions offered

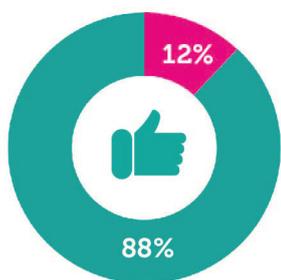


More daycare of children services offer sessions during working hours during school holidays:

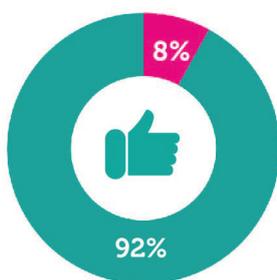


Early learning and childcare services are high quality services:

Daycare of children



Childminders



■ quality good or better for all themes
■ quality adequate or lower for at least one theme

■ quality good or better for all themes
■ quality adequate or lower for at least one theme

Complaints upheld compared to last year:



Daycare of children services complaints per 1,000 services down to



Childminding services complaints per 1,000 services up to

Executive summary

Children experiencing early learning and childcare

- The number of children registered with early learning and childcare services¹ has increased again. 253,280 children were registered at 31 December 2017, an increase of 0.4% from 252,200 children registered in 2016.
- The number of children registered increased in both childminding and daycare of children services and the increase has mainly been in 3-year-old children and 7-11-year-old children.

Number of registered services and service capacity

- At 31 December 2017 there were 9,127 registered early learning and childcare services in Scotland (3,701 daycare of children services and 5,426 childminding services) a decrease of 2.9% compared to 2016. The drop of 4.3% in the number of childminders (243 fewer services) was in large part due to a reduction in the number of new services registering in 2017. In 2017, there were 477 new childminding services registered compared to 592 in 2016. The small decrease in the number of daycare of children services (32 fewer services) was mainly due to a decrease in the number of playgroups.
- The overall capacity in early learning and childcare services decreased slightly by 0.2%, from 200,190 in 2016 to 199,869 registered places available at 31 December 2017. Total capacity in childminding services decreased while capacity in daycare of children services increased in 2017. The increase in daycare of children places was due to an increase in capacity in nurseries and out of school care services.
- The average size of daycare of children services has continued to increase every year. The average size of service in 2017 was 44.9 places compared to 44.2 in 2016 and 43.0 in 2015.

Funded places and service availability

- The proportion of services reporting that they provided funded early learning and childcare (ELC) has increased in 2017. At 31 December 2017, 94.1% of nurseries, 75.5% of children and family centres and 74.9% of playgroups provided funded places.
- More daycare of children services now offer whole-day sessions; 58% offered this option. Almost all private nurseries (97.4%) offered whole-day sessions. There was a particular increase in service provision in local authority nurseries: 41.9% of local authority nurseries offered the option of whole-day sessions, a 7.8 percentage point increase from last year.
- Before-school and after-school care has increased across all service categories, with childminders, private nurseries and out of school care services continuing to offer the highest levels of care before and after school. The proportion of services offering a service in the morning before school hours has increased from 65.0% in 2016 to 69.2% in 2017. A slightly higher proportion of services offered a service after school hours compared to the previous year (82.0% compared to 81.3% last year).

¹ This includes childminders and all daycare of children services except crèches

Quality of services

- The quality of services remained high overall with 92.1% of childminders and 88.3% of daycare of children services found to be good or better for all quality themes. This represents a slight increase compared to 2016, when 91.8% of childminders and 87.6% of daycare services were achieving this standard. The proportions of childminders and daycare of children services with all quality themes found to be weak or unsatisfactory remained very low.
- In general, childminders and nurseries had higher evaluations than out of school care or playgroups, while children and family centres consistently had the best evaluations of all early learning and childcare service types.
- Nurseries run by local authorities achieved the highest evaluations compared to those operated by other sectors. 94.5% of local authority nursery services were found to be good or better in all quality themes, ahead of voluntary/not for profit services (88.2%) and private nurseries (81.5%). Excellent care can be found in all sectors, however.

Geographical variance in service provision

- **Urban – rural areas:** As in previous years there were more early learning and childcare services per population aged 0-15 years old in rural than in urban areas.
- In terms of service quality, there were no distinct differences between services located in rural or urban areas. There was a higher rate of early learning and childcare services in small towns and rural areas compared to urban areas (rate per population aged 0-15 years old) although the number of services was higher in urban areas than in rural areas. The capacity in daycare of children services per 10,000 population (0-15 years old) decreased slightly overall compared to 2016. Although there was a small increase in the rate in remote small towns, the rates in other areas all decreased compared to 2016.
- **Levels of deprivation:** There were proportionately fewer childminders in the 10% most deprived areas (19.7 per 10,000 population 0-15 years old) than in the 10% least deprived areas (69.2 per 10,000 population 0-15 years old). While there was no connection between the deprivation levels and the rates of nurseries overall, there were differences between the sectors providing nursery services. The 30% least deprived areas had the lowest rate of local authority nurseries while having the highest proportion of private nursery services.
- For childminding services, the quality of services varied according to the levels of deprivation – in the least deprived areas, the number of high-quality childminders was greater. For daycare of children services as a whole, there was no clear link between the distribution of high-quality services and levels of deprivation.

Definitions of the terms we use

This publication is produced together with a suite of data tables in Excel format. Throughout this report these are referred to as 'supporting data tables'. These tables are presented in a file called 'Early Learning and Childcare Statistics 2017 – Supporting data tables' and can be downloaded from <http://www.careinspectorate.com/index.php/statistics-and-analysis>

Definitions of the terms we use

The Care Inspectorate registers daycare of children services and childminders, which this report will collectively refer to as early learning and childcare services². For the purposes of this report, this includes daycare services only provided for school-aged children such as out of school care services and holiday play schemes.

The report also includes, but is not restricted to, information on early learning and childcare for 3- and 4-year-olds (and eligible 2-year-olds) funded by local authorities under the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.

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 2017, including comparisons over time and number by provider sector and type of care service.
- **Children registered with early learning and childcare services**, calculated as the number of children registered with services as at 31 December 2017. This means the number of children enrolled with a service, even though they may not attend every day or only for part-day sessions. There is some element of double counting in the number of registered children, as children can be registered with more than one service, for example a child attending a morning nursery session and then a childminder in the afternoon. It is possible that the number of children enrolled can be larger than the service's registered capacity, due to all children not attending at the same time, for example where services offer part-time sessions.
- **Capacity**, which is the maximum possible attendance in a service at any one time, measured by number of available registered places.
- Information on the quality of early learning and childcare services through analysis of grading data as at 31 December 2017.
- Information on **complaints** in early learning and childcare services that were investigated by the Care Inspectorate between 1 January and 31 December 2017.
- Information on the number of services providing funded places under the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 as at 31 December 2017.

² When reporting on the number of children registered with early learning and childcare services, we would usually exclude crèche services, as they predominantly provide a drop-in service.

Childminding is defined by the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010 as someone 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 related to the carer
- the fostering of children or kinship care
- someone caring for children in the children's 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 include 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 who 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.

Daycare of children is defined by the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010 as a service that provides care for children on non-domestic premises for a total of more than two hours a 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 where the provision is part of an educational activity. 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 by the services in their 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 a previous year, or from information about the service, for example their conditions of registration.

A summary of the main service categories featured in this report are presented below with a brief description of each.

Children and family centre

Sometimes called community nurseries, children and family centres usually provide a full-day 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. This also includes specialised services, such as women's aid, housing support related services or respite care and support.

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 playscheme

Provides care for school-aged children during the school holidays (this does not include activity-based clubs).

Nursery

Provides daycare facilities for children aged under 5 years, with some also caring for school-aged children. The service is normally used by parents and carers on a regular basis rather than a drop-in basis and the service is provided as a minimum during the school term. Nurseries can take several forms, such as a private nursery, a local authority nursery class or school or a nursery that is part of an independent school.

Nursery providing additional childcare

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 mainly primary-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

As above but where additional childcare (for example, breakfast club or holiday playscheme) 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.

Sector provider types in early learning and childcare services

Public and local authority providers: this includes services run by local authorities and three services run by health boards.

Private providers: private businesses run by a sole trader, partnership or a limited company. Private providers operate on the basis of making a profit. Some offer funded places in partnership with a local authority. All childminding is run as a private business.

Voluntary or not for profit providers: also known as the third sector, voluntary and not for profit providers generally re-invest profits back into the services and include charities.

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 some eligible 2-year-olds also receive this level of funding. This will increase to 1140 hours per year by 2020 (although a phasing in of the expanded entitlement means that some children will receive increased funded hours before 2020). The Scottish Government has published A Blueprint for 2020, which sets out the policy vision and framework for delivering the expansion of the early learning and childcare entitlement. The new service model will be 'provider neutral'. It will offer parents and carers a greater choice of settings from which to access their funded entitlement and through the introduction of a new 'national standard', provide assurance that, regardless of whether the funded hours are provided by a service in the public, private or third sectors, or through provision offered by childminders, the child will have a high-quality experience.

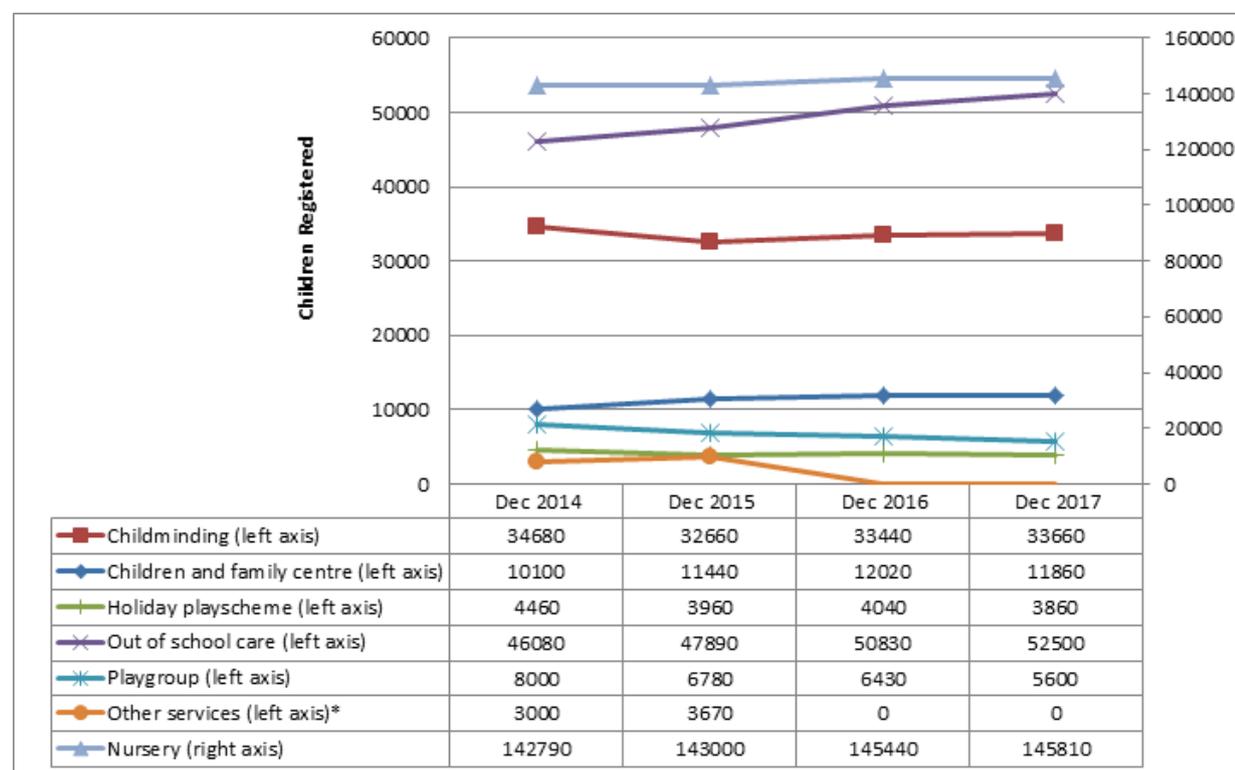
Other types of funding for children to attend early learning and childcare services can be made by local authorities. However, most funding is under the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act (2014) and therefore this publication only covers this type of funding, described as 'funded early learning and childcare' or 'funded places'.

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

Overall, 253,280³ children were registered with an early learning and childcare service on 31 December 2017⁴. This is an increase compared to the 252,200 registered at the same point in 2016 and the 249,400 registered at 31 December 2015.

Of these, 219,620 (86.7%) children were registered with daycare of children services and 33,660 (13.3%) children were registered with childminders (see figure 1 below and table 1a in the supporting tables). This is a rate of 27.7 children registered with early learning and childcare services per 100 population aged 0-15. These rates vary according to each age group, and suggest that almost all children aged 3 and 4 were registered with at least one service, compared to just over half of all 2-year old-children and around a third of 5-year-olds. These rates are consistent with those seen in 2016. For more information and a breakdown by each age group, see supporting table 1a.

Figure 1: Number of children registered with early learning and childcare services, by main type of service, as at 31 December 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017



*From 2016 onwards services are all classified as one of the set categories, there is no more category for 'other services' or 'no single service type'

1.1 Number of children registered with childminding services

The number of children registered with childminding services has increased from 33,440 in 2016 to 33,660 in 2017 (an increase of 0.7%). This is despite a decrease in the number of childminders operating compared to last year (5,426 services compared to 5,669).

³ Each child may attend more than one service, therefore may be counted more than once in this total.

⁴ This excludes crèche services.

The data collected indicates an increase in the number of 2-year-olds and school-aged children registered with childminders. The number of 2-year-olds registered increased by 3.0% compared to 2016, and the number of children aged 5 to 11 also increased by 2.1%. In terms of the rate per 100 population, the increase in the number of 2-year-olds is reflected in a rate of 8.1 per 100 in 2017 compared to 7.8 per 100 in 2016. For the 5 to 11 years age group however, the consistent rate of 3.9 per 100 population observed in both 2017 and 2016 indicates that the increase in number of children registered is in line with the increase in the population in this age group.

There was a 3.2% decrease in the number of 4-year-olds registered with childminders or, in terms of population, 6.6 children per 100, which is slightly down from 6.7 per 100 in 2016.

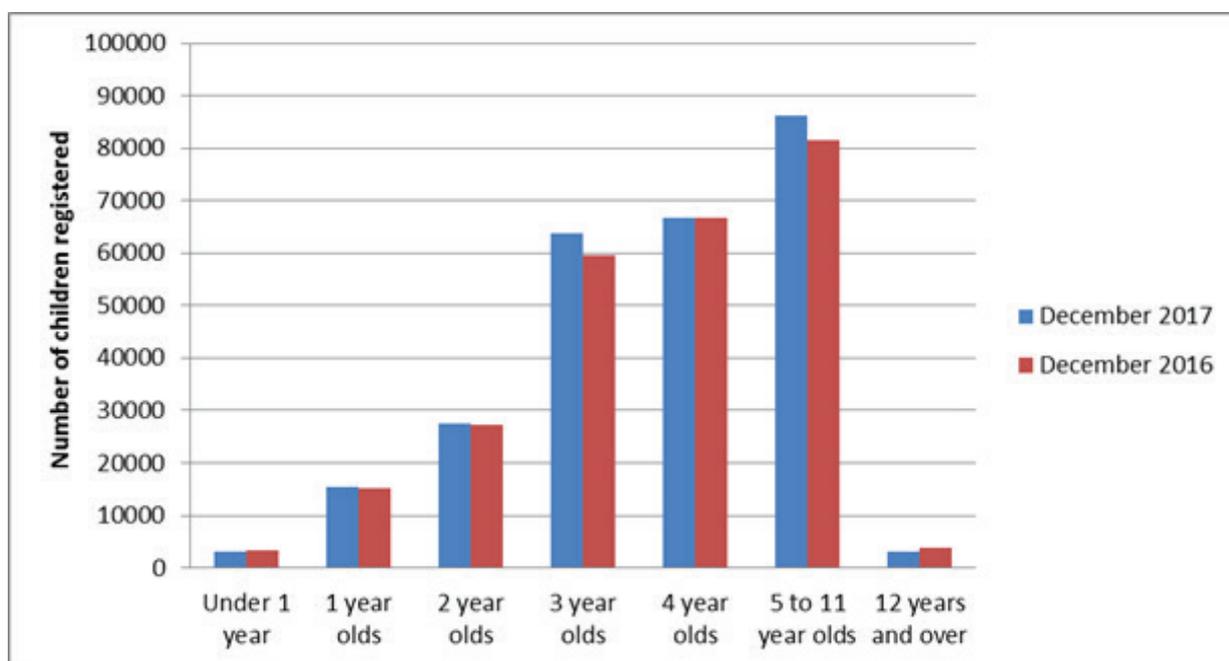
1.2 Number of children in daycare of children services

The number of children registered with daycare of children services has increased from 218,760 in 2016 to 219,620 in 2017. The largest increases were seen in the 3-year-olds (7.0% increase compared to 2016) 5-year-olds (4.0% increase) and 7 to 11-year-olds (3.9% increase) age groups.

There were small decreases in the number of children registered compared to 2016 in children aged under 1, in the 4-year-old age group and in children aged 12 and over.

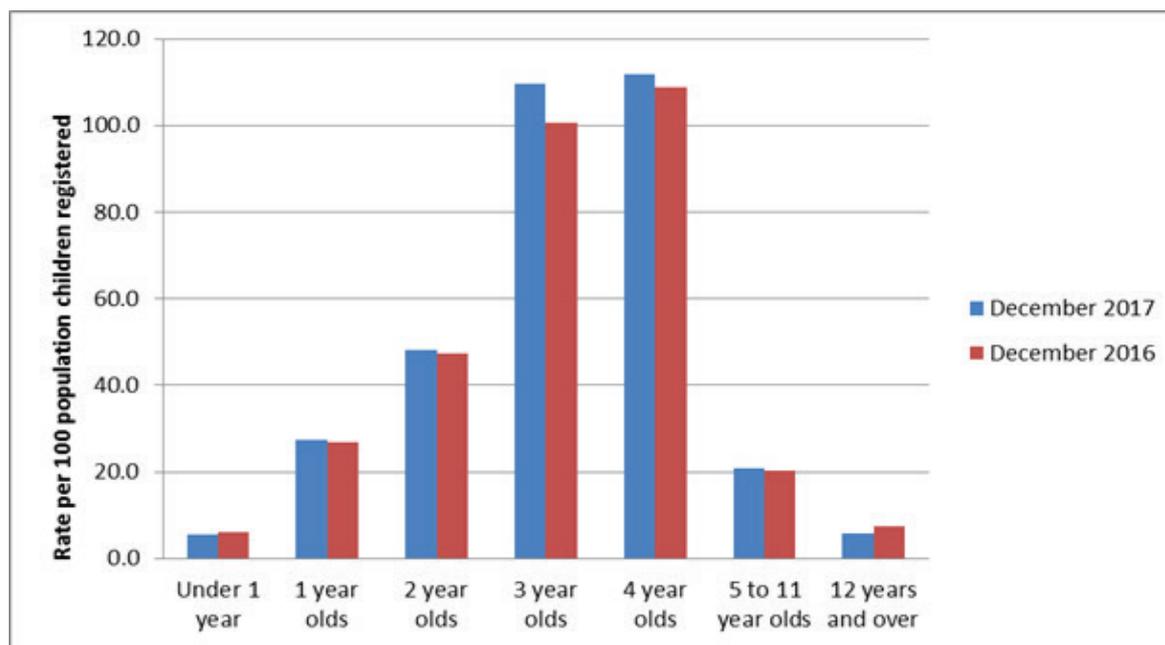
Figure 2 below illustrates the increases seen in the 3-year-old and school-aged age groups, and the comparison to last year in terms of number of children registered.

Figure 2: Number of children registered in daycare of children services by age group



According to the latest population projections, the number of children in Scotland increased compared to the previous year. Therefore it is important to consider the number of children registered as a rate per 100 children in the age group population.

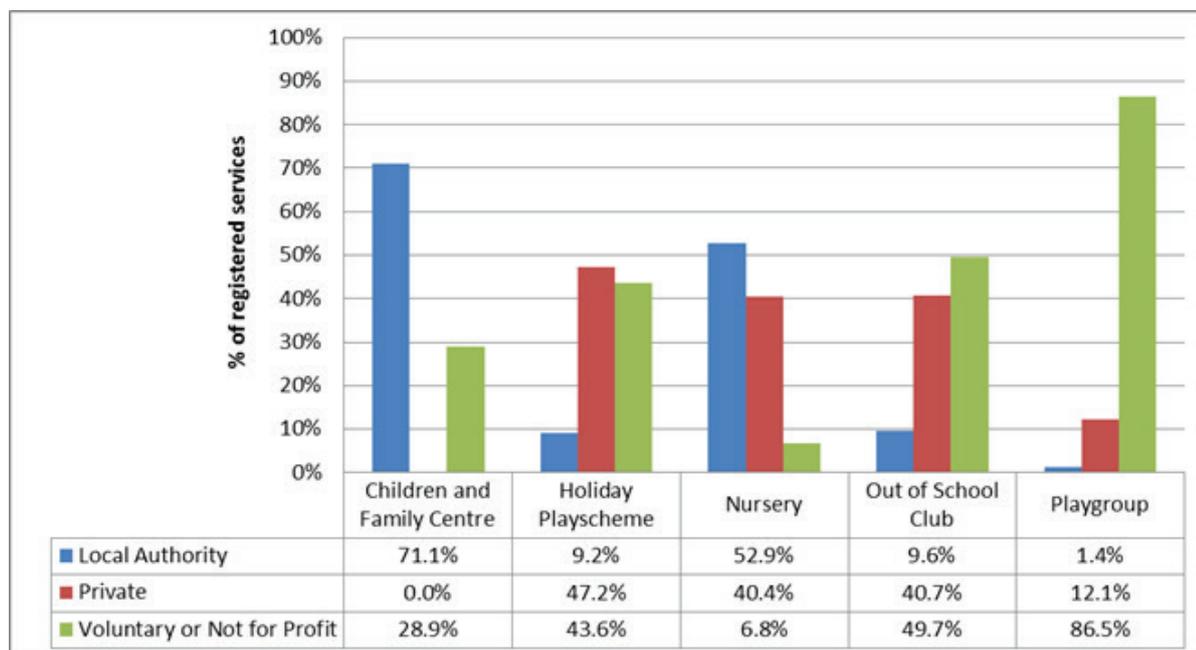
Figure 3: Rate per 100 population children registered in daycare of children services



Both the 3-year-olds and 4-year-olds age groups have a rate per 100 population over 100 (109.6 and 111.8 respectively) indicating that there are more children registered than there are children in the population projections. This represents a high number of children in these age groups registered in nursery services and also registered with other care services, for example a holiday playscheme, or attending a childminder before or after nursery.

Daycare of children services cover a wide range of different types of care provision, and the numbers of these different types varies across Scotland and across sectors too. The following sections consider the variations in the largest types of care. Figure 4 shows the breakdown of the number of services registered by care service type and sector.

Figure 4: Percentage of registered children in daycare of children services by provider sector as at 31 December 2017



1.3 Number of children in nurseries

The number of children registered with nurseries continued to increase, from 145,440 to 145,810 children (an increase of 0.3%). The number registered in local authority services decreased by 0.5%, while the numbers in private and voluntary/not for profit services increased by 1.0% and 1.8% respectively.

Local authorities remain the largest provider of nurseries in terms of children registered. They account for 52.9% of children registered (see figure 4 above). Despite voluntary services having the lowest proportion of children registered they had the largest percentage increase in number of children registered in 2017 compared to 2016.

There are variations in the age groups of children registered in nurseries according to sector. Most children aged under 2 years attending a nursery service were registered with private services (78.2% of children aged 2-years-old or younger) while the majority of children aged 3 or 4 years were registered with local authority services (64.4% and 74.2% of children registered respectively). This is because only 26.0% of local authority services offered places for 2-year-old children, in contrast to private services, 90.6% of which offered places for 2-year-olds. However, all local authority nurseries provided funded places for 3- and 4-year-old children. Refer to figure 2 and supporting table 1b for further information.



1.4 Number of children in out of school care services

The number of children registered with out of school care services has increased from 50,830 in 2016 to 52,550 in 2017, an increase of 3.4% (note: out of school care does not include holiday playschemes, which are a separate category for the purposes of this report). The voluntary or not for profit sector was the largest provider in terms of number of children registered with an out of school service accounting for 49.7% of children registered (in comparison, the private sector had 40.7% and local authority services had 9.6% of children registered). See figure 4 above and supporting table 1c for more detail.

1.5 School aged children registered with services

School-aged childcare is delivered before or after the school day with many children also attending during school holidays.

Across all service types (excluding crèches) 79,198 children aged 5 and over were registered with services for out of school care.

Of the children aged 5 or older registered with a childminder, 95.5% used the service before or after school. Similarly in daycare of children services, 94.3% of children aged 5 and older attended the service to receive school-aged childcare.

97.8% of children aged 5 and over (50,364 children) who were registered with out of school care services used them before or after they attended school. In nurseries that also provide additional services (for example, breakfast club) 92.4% (7,683 children) of registered children aged 5 or older used these services before or after attending school. See supporting tables 8 and 9 for further information.

1.6 Children aged under 1 registered with services

In 2017, 0.6% of childminders, 0.4% of nurseries and 7.3% of children and family centres had very young babies between 0 and 3 months registered with their service. The proportion of children and family centres with children aged between 6 months and 1 year has decreased from 57.1% in 2016 to 49.0% in 2017. With this exception, the other early learning and childcare types had similar rates to 2016. In total, across all service types, 5.5 per 100 of the population aged under 1 year old were registered with a service (including childminders, but excluding crèches).

Of all children registered with early learning and childcare services (excluding crèches) 0.9% were aged 6 to 12 months, 0.1% were aged 3 to 6 months and only 0.02% were aged under 3 months.

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 2017, there were 9,127 early learning and childcare services in Scotland, with a total combined capacity of 199,870 places.

Of these 3,701 were daycare of children services, providing 166,260 places and 5,426 were childminders providing 33,610 places. While the number of services decreased by 32 daycare of children services and 243 childminders, the total capacity actually increased in daycare of children services by 1,250 places (capacity is defined as the maximum potential attendance at any one time, measured by the number of registered places available according to each service's conditions of registration). Overall, the net difference in capacity across all early learning and childcare services compared to December 2016 is 0.2%, or 320 fewer places.

The reduction in the number of childminding services operating in 2017 has resulted in a decrease in the combined maximum capacity in childminding services by 4.5% compared to December 2016. Despite this however, the average number of places per service has remained constant at 6.2 places per childminder and, as noted in section 1, the number of children registered with childminding services has actually increased compared to 2016.

The capacity available in daycare of children services has increased once again this year. Despite the number of services decreasing by 32, capacity has increased by 1,250 places (0.8%). This continues the upward trend in the number of available places since 2014 in response to the expansion of funded hours in early learning and childcare in August 2014.

The reduction in the number of childminding services at 31 December 2017 compared to the previous year is due in large part to a reduction in the number of new services registered during the year. In 2017 we registered 477 new childminding services compared to 592 new services registered in 2016. In addition, there is an apparent upward trend in the number of childminding services cancelling their registration within the first 12 months of operation. 10.3% of the childminding services that registered during 2016 ceased operating within the first 12 months. This rate has risen by one percentage point in each of the last three years.

Table 1: Trends in numbers of services and capacity (all services, daycare of children services and childminding services)

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
All early learning and childcare services							
Number of services	10,159	10,099	9,968	9,859	9,726	9,402	9,127
Total capacity	189,850	189,410	190,040	191,880	196,440	200,190	199,870
Childminders							
Number of services	6,249	6,274	6,185	6,102	5,954	5,669	5,426
Total capacity	34,710	35,120	35,120	34,430	34,220	35,180	33,610
Daycare of children services							
Number of services	3,910	3,825	3,783	3,757	3,722	3,733	3,701
Total capacity	155,150	154,290	154,920	157,450	162,220	165,010	166,260

Most childminders are registered for a maximum capacity of 6 children, which is the most they can look after at any one on their own. Some childminders however employ assistants which may allow them to have a maximum capacity greater than 6. The average number of places per childminder increased to 6.2 in 2016 and has remained at this level in 2017, indicating an increased use of assistants in childminding services compared to pre-2016 levels.

The average number of places in daycare of children services has continued to increase year on year and has risen again in 2017 from 44.2 to 44.9 places per service (see Table 2). In 2017, the Care Inspectorate completed around 1,000 variations for daycare of children services. Most of these variations enabled services to increase their capacity, expand their opening hours or to accommodate a wider range of age groups.⁵

Table 2: Average number of places available in childminding and daycare of children services as at 31 December 2011 – 2016

Average places	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Childminding	5.6	5.6	5.7	5.6	5.7	6.2	6.2
Daycare of children	39.7	40.3	41.0	41.9	43.0	44.2	44.9

Note: these averages are based on the total numbers of services at 31 December. In some previous year's reports averages have excluded inactive services.

2.2 Services by provider sector

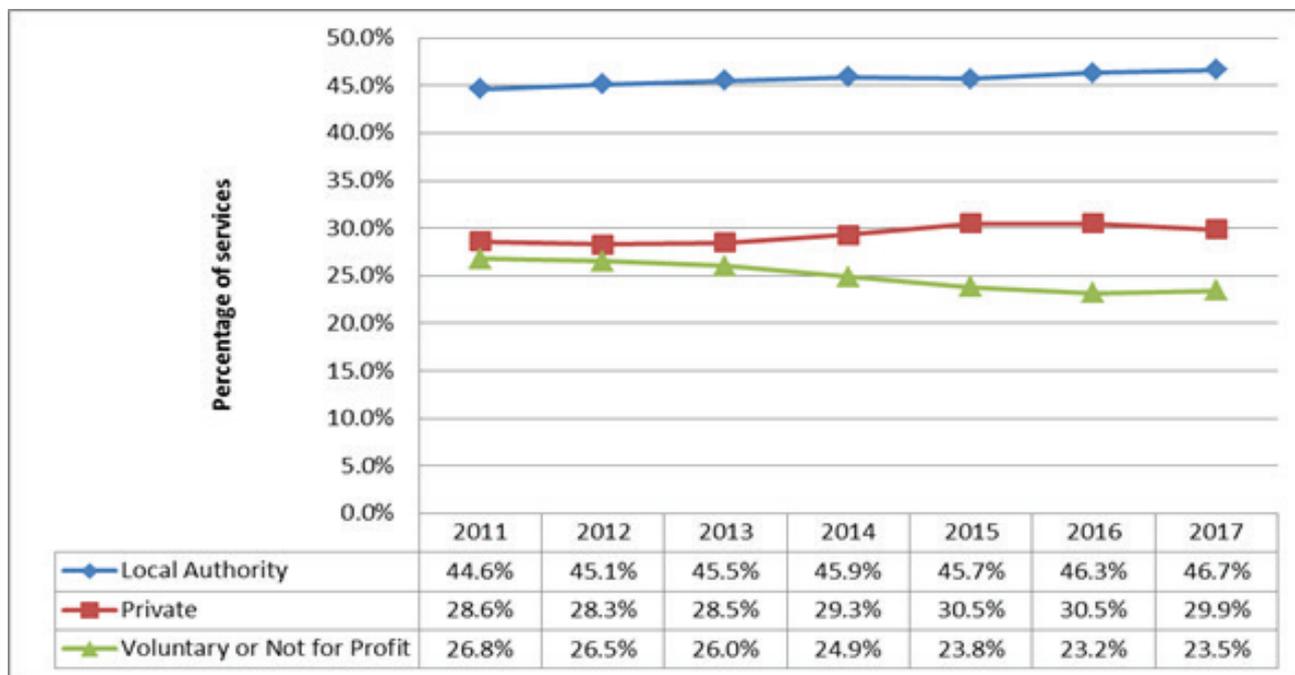
All childminding services are privately operated, while daycare of children services are operated by a range of private, local authority and voluntary/not for profit service providers.

For daycare of children services, 46.7% were provided by local authorities (including three services run by health boards) 29.9% were privately operated services while 23.5% were voluntary/not for profit

⁵ Registered care services can apply for a variation to add, vary or remove a condition of registration. For daycare of children services that want to increase their service provision, this could be an increase to the number of registered places (capacity) or changes to the service availability (opening hours).

services. The distribution by sector is similar to 2016, the difference being a decrease of 0.6 percentage points in the number of private services with an increase of around 0.3 percentage points in both the local authority and voluntary/ not for profit services (see figure 5 below).

Figure 5: Percentage of registered daycare of children services by provider sector, as at 31 December 2011 to 2017



2.3 Numbers of services and capacities by service categories

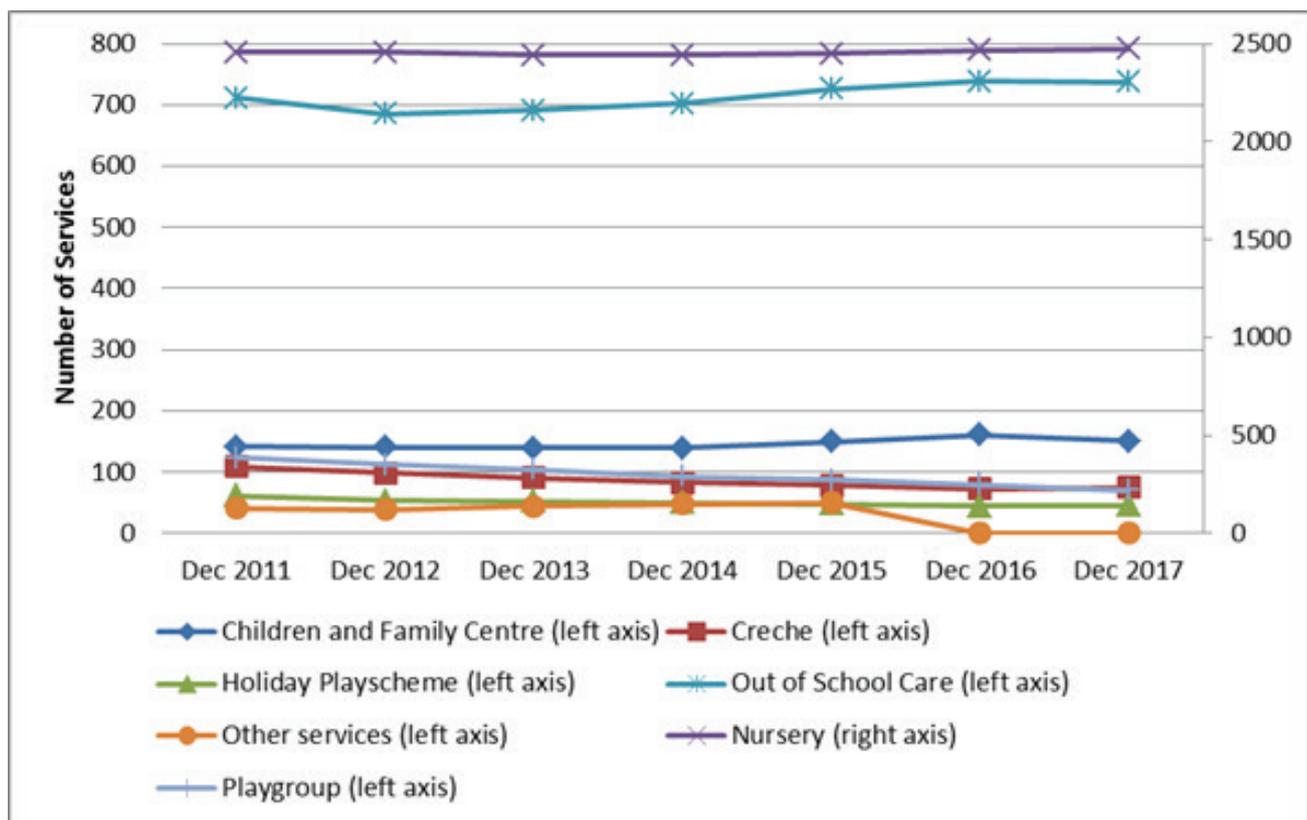
Daycare of children services covers a wide range of different areas of care provision, the largest of which is nurseries followed by out of school care and playgroups. Each registered service may provide multiple different types of service. For example, a nursery may provide out of school care, or a children and family centre may operate a holiday playscheme. We have categorised services in this report based on what they have told us is the main type of service they provide.

The decrease in the number of daycare of children services this year compared to 2016 is mostly accounted for in the number of playgroup services going from 248 in 2016 to 219 in 2017 (-11.7%). There were small variations in the numbers of other types of services. A full summary of the number of services operating each year by service type is presented in Table 3 below.

Although not included within the scope of this report, childcare agencies are another type of service regulated by the Care Inspectorate. Childcare agencies supply or introduce to parents a carer who looks after a child or young person up to the age of 16, wholly or mainly in the home of that child's parent or parents. They could include for example, nanny agencies, home-based childcare services or sitter services. These agencies may be managed by private, voluntary or local authority providers, although just over half of the services operating at 31 December 2017 were privately operated.

There were 25 childcare agencies operating at 31 December 2017, similar to the 24 services at the same point in 2016. Most agencies perform strongly in terms of quality evaluations, with 83% of services found to be good or better in all quality themes at 31 December 2017 (matching the 83% of services achieving this standard in 2016).

Figure 6: Number of registered daycare of children services by main service type, as at 31 December 2011 to 2017



* From 2016 onwards, services are all classified as one of the set categories, there is no longer a category for 'other services' or 'no single service type'.

Table 3: Number of registered daycare of children services by main service type, as at 31 December 2011 to 2017

	Dec 11	Dec 12	Dec 13	Dec 14	Dec 15	Dec 16	Dec 17
Children and family centre	142	140	139	139	149	161	151
Creche	109	98	91	83	78	73	75
Holiday playscheme	61	53	52	50	48	44	43
Nursery (all)	2,458	2,458	2,442	2,443	2,449	2,468	2,475
Nursery (local authority)	1,495	1,502	1,494	1,494	1,486	1,497	1,503
Nursery (private)	768	769	767	768	788	789	778
Nursery (voluntary/not for profit)	195	187	181	181	175	182	194
Out of school care (all)	712	686	691	703	726	739	738
OOSC (local authority)	93	88	89	93	97	99	96
OOSC (private)	239	222	225	240	270	290	279
OOSC (voluntary/not for profit)	380	376	377	370	359	350	363
Playgroup	387	351	324	291	272	248	219
Other services*	41	39	44	48	50	–	–
Total	3,910	3,825	3,783	3,757	3,772	3,773	3,701

Comparing the situation in 2017 to 2011, we have seen a decrease in both the number of childminders and daycare of children services (over 1,000 services combined) but capacity has actually increased despite this reduction in services. Capacity in all early learning and childcare services has increased by 5.3%, or 10,010 places, compared to 2011. This increase in capacity has been driven mainly by the increase in funded hours provision from 2014 onwards, reflected in the large increase in capacity in nursery services. Children and family centres and out of school care services also increased in terms of number of registered places in this time.

Table 4: Average places per service and total capacity of services, as at December 2011 and 2017

	2011		2017	
	Total capacity (registered places)	Average capacity per service (registered places)	Total capacity (registered places)	Average capacity per service (registered places)
Childcare services by main service category:				
Childminding	34,710	6.1	33,610	6.2
Children and family centre	7,040	49.6	8,210	54.4
Creche	4,240	38.9	2,350	31.4
Holiday playscheme	2,370	38.9	1,590	36.2
Nursery	104,050	42.3	116,770	47.2
Out of school care	27,580	38.7	32,320	43.8
Playgroup	8,710	22.5	5,020	22.9
Other services*	1,160	28.3	–	–
Total	189,860		199,860	
Total excluding childminding	155,150	39.7	166,260	44.9

* From 2016 onwards, services are all classified as one of the set categories, there is no longer a category for 'other services' or 'no single service type'.

Note: All figures are rounded to the nearest 10 to express the uncertainty in these estimates. For this reason, totals may not exactly equal the sum of their parts.

2.3a Children and family centres

All children and family centres are provided by local authorities and voluntary/not for profit organisations. The number of children and family centres operating has fallen from 161 in 2016 to 151 in 2017. Despite the reduction in services, the total combined capacity has actually increased, with 8,214 places in 2017 compared to 7,040 in 2016. This increase in capacity results in an increase in the average number of places per service, from 49.9 in 2016 to 54.4 in 2017.

A further 56 services also provided support associated with children and family centres as an additional category; a slight increase compared to the 53 services in 2016.

2.3b Crèches

Crèches registered with the Care Inspectorate provide a service for more than two hours a day and more than five times per year. Other crèche services that are provided for two hours or less per day or do not operate more than five times a year do not need to register with the Care Inspectorate and therefore are not included in these statistics.

Crèches provide drop-in care for children. The number of crèche services had been decreasing each year since 2011. Between 2011 and 2016, the number of crèche services dropped from 109 to 73 services. In 2017 this number has increased slightly to 75 services, though still 31.2% lower than the level in 2011. A further 72 services offered crèche facilities as an additional type of care provision in 2017. These were mainly nurseries (32 services) and children and family centres (26 services). The number of services providing crèche facilities as an additional type of care provision has also been decreasing over time.

2.3c Holiday playschemes

Services that provide care for school-aged children during school holidays only are called holiday playschemes. Services providing a holiday playscheme as their main service have been decreasing year on year, from 61 services in 2011 to 45 in 2017. Like voluntary sector playgroups, many playschemes continue operating but are no longer required to be registered. Some provide only supervised activities rather than care and others have reduced their opening hours to two hours per day or five days per year. Some playschemes may have also closed due to the increase in demand for and the availability of all-year-round provision for school-aged children. At 31 December 2017, 396 other services types operating during the school holidays also identified themselves as providing a playscheme as part of the overall provision.

2.3d Nurseries

Nurseries mainly provide early learning and childcare for children under primary school age. Nurseries can take several forms, from a nursery class attached to a primary school, to a standalone nursery. Nurseries are provided by public, private and voluntary/not for profit providers.

The number of nursery services increased in 2017 compared to the previous year by 0.2%.

Of the 2,474 nurseries operating in 2017, 60.7% were local authority nurseries, 31.4% were private nurseries and 7.8% were voluntary/not for profit services. In 2017 the number of voluntary/not for profit services increased by 12 (6.6% increase compared to 2016) with privately run services decreasing by 11 (1.4%) and local authority services increasing by 5 services (0.3%). See table 4 above and supporting table 12b for more detail.

In 2017, nurseries offered 116,770 places for children; an average of 47.2 places per nursery. The capacity in nurseries has increased year on year, from 104,050 in 2011 to 116,770 registered places in 2017, an increase of 12.2%.

With the increase in total capacity and only a small increase in the number of nursery services operating, the average capacity per service has increased year on year from 42.3 registered places in 2011 to 47.2 in 2017. Private nurseries are generally larger (average of 60.5 places) compared to local authority and voluntary/not for profit nurseries (40.8 and 43.1 places on average respectively). The size of nurseries in each of the three sectors has increased year on year since 2011, the largest increase

was in voluntary/not for profit services (an additional 5.9 places per service comparing 2017 to 2011) followed by private nurseries (+5.6 places per service) and local authority services (+4.1 places per service).

At 31 December 2017, there were 20 independent school nurseries operating and 192 local authority operated nursery schools (not nursery classes that are part of a primary school establishment). These services tend to achieve higher than average evaluations at inspection and this will be further illustrated in chapter 4. In terms of service capacity, independent school nurseries are similar to most nursery services, with an average of 48.2 places per service ranging from 20 to 80 places. However, local authority nursery schools are among the largest services with an average of 69.6 places per service on average and one in six of these services providing one hundred or more places.

2.3e Out of school care services

These services provide care for school-aged children after school finishes and in almost half of services before school begins too (48.8% provide a breakfast club, a slight increase compared to 45.8% in 2016). Many also provide a service during working hours in the school holidays (68.6% compared to 66.1% in 2016). The number of out of school care services has decreased very slightly in 2017 with 738 services compared to 739 in 2016 (0.1% decrease). Until 2016, the number of out of school care services had been steadily increasing. Almost half of all out of school care services are provided by the voluntary/not for profit sector (49.1%) 37.9% are privately run services and only 13.0% are operated by local authorities.

In 2017, out of school care services offered 32,320 registered places for children, an average of 43.8 places per service. The total capacity and average places per service has been increasing year on year (see supporting tables 22, 24a and 24c).

2.3f Playgroups

Playgroups are often operated on a voluntary/not for profit basis and are run by a parent committee, usually with parents taking part in a rota to assist paid staff.

The number of playgroups has been steadily decreasing over time and this year continued this trend with 219 services operating in 2017, compared to 248 in 2016, a decrease of 29 services (11.7%). With the decrease in the number of services, the capacity available in playgroups has also decreased by a total of 700 places (12.3%) compared to 2016.

We know that in addition to those services that have closed and stopped operating, some playgroups have reduced their opening hours to two hours per day or less and therefore would no longer be required to register with the Care Inspectorate. That said, some local authorities are working in partnership with more playgroups to provide funded places (see chapter 3). In 2017, 74.9% of playgroups were providing funded places in partnership with the local authority. In the future, as the expansion of early learning and childcare increases to 1,140 funded hours in August 2020, it is possible that more playgroups may increase their operating hours and work in partnership to meet the increased demand for places.

3. Early learning and childcare funding in Scotland

The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 has significantly expanded funded early learning and childcare. The current statutory funded entitlement for all children aged 3 and 4 (and eligible 2-year-olds) is 600 hours. The funded entitlement will increase further to 1,140 hours for children aged 3 and 4 (and eligible 2-year-olds) by 2020.

The majority of funded places are offered by nurseries. Some local authorities also use playgroups and childminders to provide funded places.

Figure 7 below shows that there was an increase across all nurseries in services providing funded places, from 92.0% in 2013 to 94.1% in 2017. The proportion of private nurseries offering funded places continued to grow, while in voluntary/not for profit services the rate was lower compared to last year (but still higher than the pre-2016 levels).

Figure 7: Nurseries providing funded places, as at 31 December 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017



The proportion of services providing funded places not only increased in nurseries but also in children and family centres compared to 2016. The rate in playgroups dropped slightly by 0.5 percentage points. The trend between 2013 and 2017 is presented in table 5 on the next page.

Table 5: Proportion of services providing funded early learning and childcare as at 31 December 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017

Nurseries					
Sector	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Local authority	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Private	76.0%	78.0%	79.2%	82.3%	83.2%
Voluntary/not for profit	89.0%	90.0%	91/4%	94.5%	92.8%
All children and family centres providing funded places	92.0%	92.0%	92.6%	93.9%	94.1%
Children and family centres					
Sector	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Local authority	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	95.8%	93.7%
Voluntary/not for profit	40.0%	36.4%	48.9%	37.9%	44.6%
All nurseries providing funded places	79.3%	78.7%	84.0%	72.0%	75.5%
Playgroups					
Sector	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Private	62.0%	64.0%	66.0%	72.2%	76.0%
Voluntary/not for profit	69.0%	71.0%	74.0%	76.7%	75.5%
All playgroups providing funded places	67.0%	69.0%	72.0%	75.4%	74.9%

Notes:

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

(2)The figures for 2016 indicate a decrease in the proportion of children and family centres that offer funded places. However this is due to a re-classification of services that offer very specialised services such as respite services for children with special needs, where we wouldn't expect to see funded places offered.

Most services (68.2%) providing funded places offer these for children aged 3 years and older only. A further 29.2% of services offer funded places for 2-year-olds in addition to children aged 3 or older. Only 2.6% of services offering funded places do so exclusively for 2-year-olds. 44.2% of daycare of children services that are registered to provide care for children under 3 years old only offer funded places for children aged over 3.

Three-quarters of local authority nurseries (75.3%) that offer funded places do so exclusively for children aged 3 and older. The majority of private and voluntary/not for profit nurseries that provide funded places are also focused on provision for children aged 3 and older. 28.0% of nurseries offer funded places for 2-year-olds (including those offering places for 2-year-olds in addition to 3- and 4-year-olds). See tables 6 and 7 below for more detail.

Table 6: Proportion of services offering funded places by age groups

Daycare service type	Provision of funded places		
	funded places for 2 year olds only	funded places for 2 year olds and 3 and older	funded places for 3 years and older only
Children and family centre	16.7%	71.1%	12.3%
Nursery	0.8%	27.2%	72.0%
Playgroup	13.4%	31.1%	55.5%

Table 7: Nursery services offering funded places by age groups

Nurseries by sector	Provision of funded places		
	funded places for 2 year olds only	funded places for 2 year olds and 3 and older	funded places for 3 years and older only
Public	0.4%	24.2%	75.3%
Private	1.7%	32.0%	66.3%
Voluntary or not for profit	1.1%	33.9%	65.0%
All nurseries	0.8%	27.2%	72.0%

The quality of services providing funded places was higher than those not providing funded places (see supporting tables 34i and 34j). For example, in 85.9% of private nurseries providing funded places, the quality was good or better for all quality themes assessed by the Care Inspectorate¹⁰, while this was the case for 63.9% of private nurseries not providing funded places. A similar picture in terms of quality of service could be seen in voluntary/not for profit nurseries, where 90.5% of services providing funded places were evaluated as good or better for all themes, compared to 44.4% not providing funded places. The same applies to playgroups, where services providing funded places were of higher quality than those not providing funded places. This reflects the fact that high quality is a key criteria for becoming a funded provider.

4. The quality of early learning and childcare services

The quality of early learning and childcare services has remained high overall. In almost half of all childminders (47.6%) the quality was found to be of the highest standard (excellent or very good in all themes assessed) a slight decrease from 48.7% in 2016. As a result of this, we have seen an increase in the proportion of services found to be good, very good or excellent in all themes (92.1% compared to 91.8% last year).

- In general, childminders tend to achieve better evaluations at inspection compared to daycare of children services. At 31 December 2017, 92.1% of childminders were found to be good or better in all quality themes compared to 88.3% of daycare of children services.
- There has been a decrease in daycare of children services that were found to be very good or excellent in all quality themes, from 41.5% in 2015, to 40.3% in 2016 and now to 37.8% in 2017.
- The proportion of daycare of children services found to be weak or unsatisfactory in all themes has remained very low, though this is a slight increase, from 0.2% in 2016 to 0.3% in 2017.
- Only 1.9% of daycare of children services were found to be weak or unsatisfactory in any of the quality themes, compared to 0.6% of childminders (see table 8 below and supporting table 36a). This is an improvement compared to 2016 when 2.4% of daycare of children services and 1.1% of childminders had at least one quality theme evaluated as weak or unsatisfactory.
- Local authority run services continue to perform highly compared to other sectors. A higher proportion of local authority services were evaluated as good, very good or excellent across all themes compared to other sectors, for all types of daycare of children services. When considering only services that were found to be very good or excellent in all themes, there are some exceptions where privately run services perform better than other sectors, in particular privately run crèches and out of school care services.

Figures 8 and 9 below illustrate the trends over time in the percentage of services achieving the highest evaluations.

Figure 8: Percentage of services found to be very good or excellent in all quality themes over time

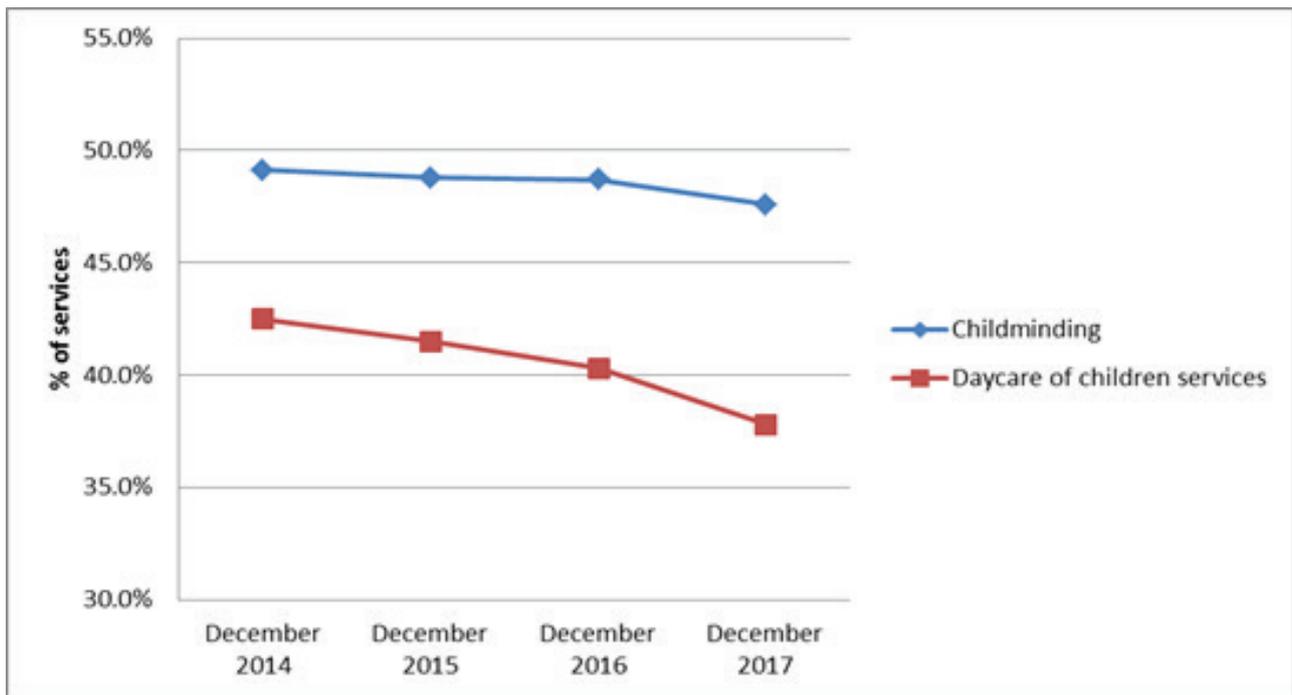


Figure 9: Percentage of services found to be good, very good or excellent in all quality themes over time

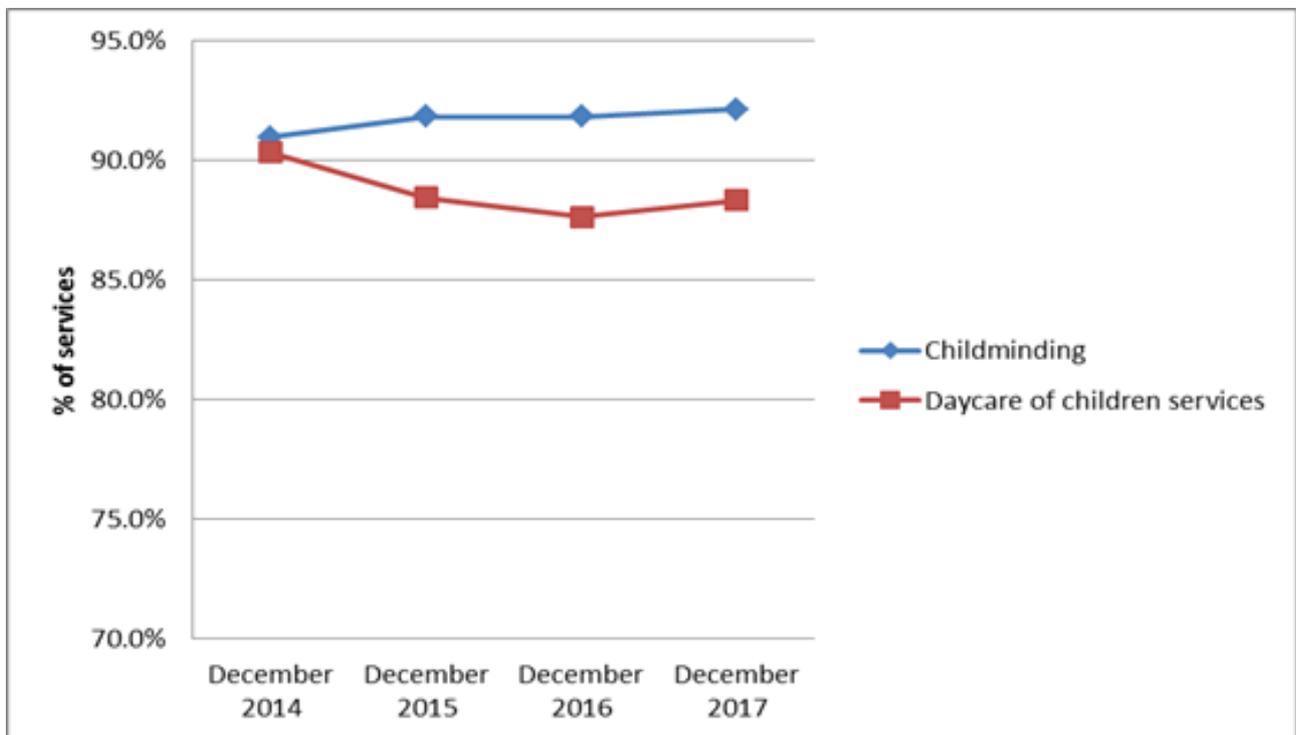


Table 8: Evaluations of childminders and daycare of children services in terms of quality theme grading, as at 31 December 2017

Service Category	Provider Sector	All themes weak or unsatisfactory	At least one theme weak or less	At least one theme adequate or less	All themes good or better	All themes very good or excellent
Childminders		0.04%	0.6%	7.9%	92.1%	47.6%
Children and family centre	Local authority	0.0%	1.1%	3.2%	96.8%	60.0%
	Voluntary/not for profit	0.0%	0.0%	5.4%	94.6%	51.8%
Children and family centre total		0.0%	0.7%	4.0%	96.0%	57.0%
Creche	Local authority	0.0%	0.0%	4.5%	95.5%	22.7%
	Private	0.0%	6.3%	18.8%	81.3%	31.3%
	Voluntary/not for profit	0.0%	3.3%	36.7%	63.3%	26.7%
Creche total		0.0%	2.9%	22.1%	77.9%	26.5%
Holiday playscheme	Local authority	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	57.1%
	Private	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%	80.0%	20.0%
	Voluntary/not for profit	3.2%	6.5%	19.4%	80.6%	35.5%
Holiday playscheme total		2.3%	4.7%	16.3%	83.7%	37.2%
Nursery	Local authority	0.2%	0.6%	5.5%	94.5%	46.6%
	Private	0.5%	2.3%	18.5%	81.5%	31.6%
	Voluntary/not for profit	0.5%	3.2%	11.8%	88.2%	43.3%
Nursery total		0.3%	1.3%	9.9%	90.1%	41.8%
Out of school care	Local authority	0.0%	0.0%	6.5%	93.5%	21.5%
	Private	0.8%	5.4%	22.1%	77.9%	27.9%
	Voluntary/not for profit	0.3%	3.2%	14.4%	85.6%	23.9%
Out of school care total		0.4%	3.6%	16.2%	83.8%	25.0%
Playgroup	Local authority	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%
	Private	0.0%	0.0%	20.8%	79.2%	16.7%
	Voluntary/not for profit	0.0%	3.2%	18.5%	81.5%	27.0%
Playgroup total		0.0%	2.8%	18.6%	81.4%	25.6%
All daycare of children services	Local authority	0.2%	0.6%	5.3%	94.7%	45.7%
	Private	0.6%	3.1%	19.5%	80.5%	30.2%
	Voluntary/not for profit	0.4%	3.1%	15.1%	84.9%	31.3%
Total		0.3%	1.9%	11.7%	88.3%	37.8%

Note: some of these percentages are based on small numbers of less than 20 services (private crèches, local authority and private holiday playschemes and local authority playgroups).

Over time, the proportion of services achieving the highest evaluations has fluctuated depending on service type and year. In terms of services found to be good or better in all themes, all service types apart from playgroups have shown improvement compared to December 2016. Childminding services have had the lowest amount of variation year on year and are the only service type to have improved and not declined in any of the last four years. When examining further and considering the services at the very highest end of the scale (those with all themes found to be very good or excellent) childminders show again the least variation year on year. These trends are illustrated in figures 10 and 11 below.

Figure 10: Percentage of services found to be good, very good or excellent in all quality themes over time

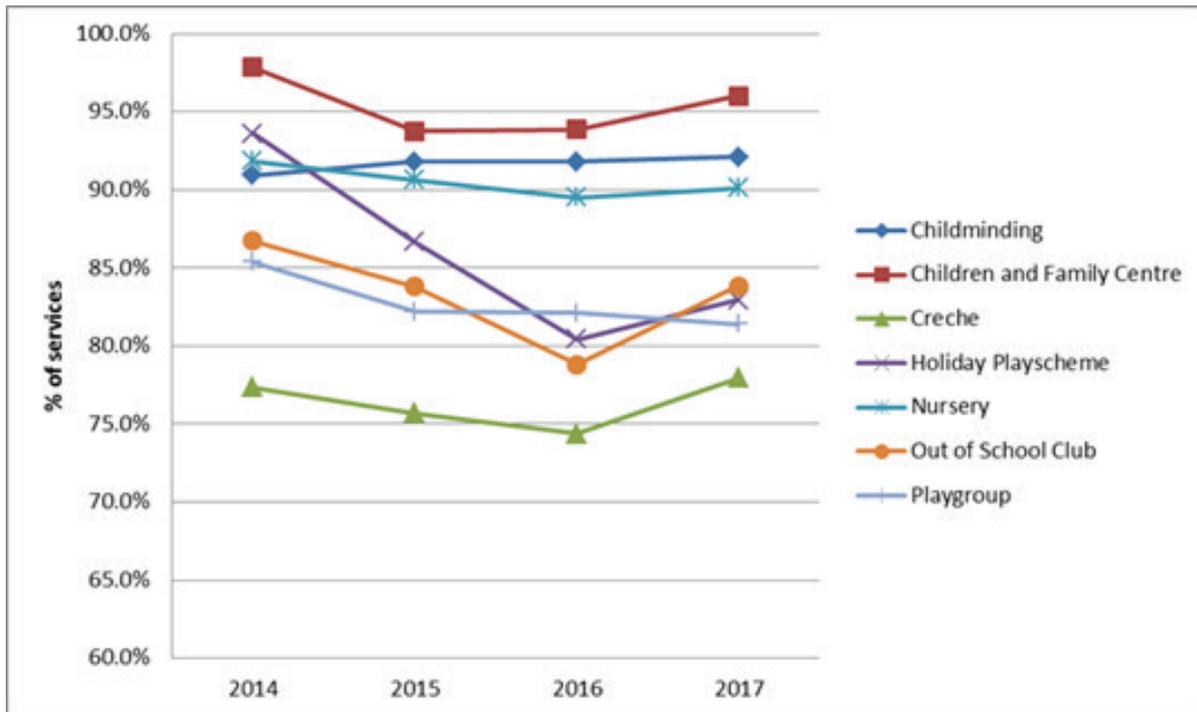
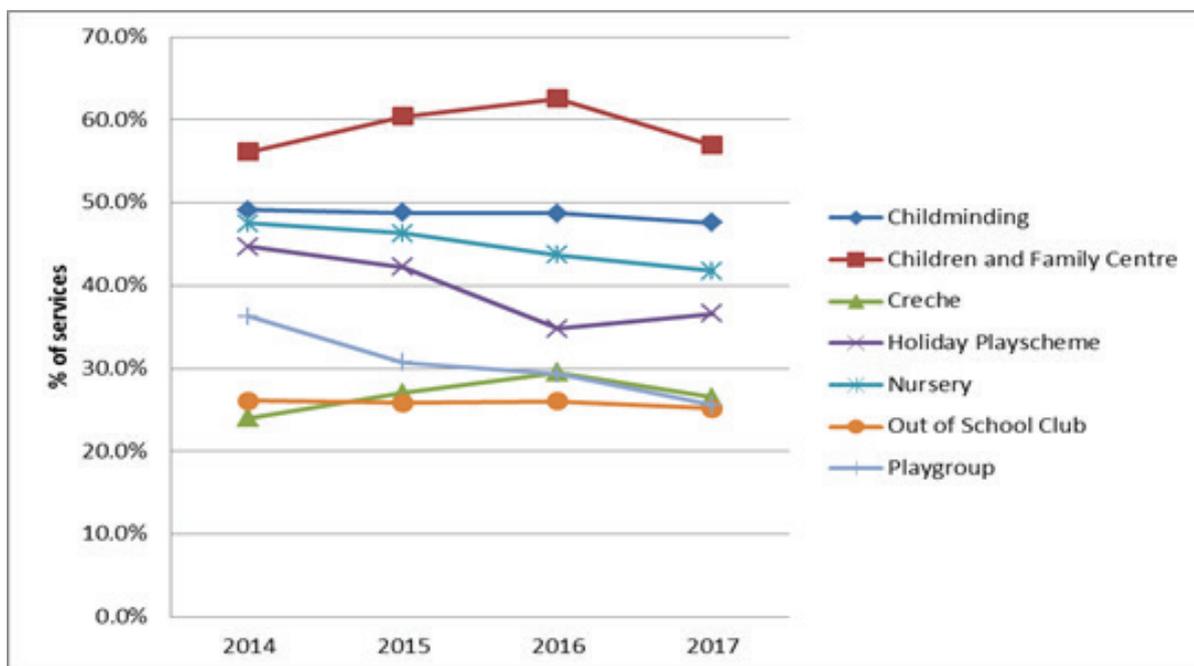


Figure 11: Percentage of services found to be very good or excellent in all quality themes over time



4.1 Evaluations of quality by provider sector

High-quality services

While most early learning and childcare services were of a high standard (with all quality themes found to be good or better) across all sectors, a larger proportion of local authority services were of high quality compared to private and voluntary or not for profit services (see table 8 above). This is the case for all types of daycare service. However, when considering the services that achieved highest grading (all themes found to be very good or excellent) the pattern is slightly different, with a higher rate of private and voluntary not for profit crèches performing better than the local authority services. Private out of school care services also have a higher proportion of very high-quality services compared to other sectors (note that these two examples are based on smaller numbers of services than most categories).

More than nine out of every ten childminders were found to be good or better in all quality themes, with over half of all services evaluated as very good or excellent across all themes. Both of these rates have increased compared to last year (92.1% up from 91.8% and 52.3% up from 48.7% respectively). For further information see table 8 above and supporting table 34.

Services where significant improvement is needed

Services where quality was found to be weak or unsatisfactory in all themes were rare, with only two childminding services (0.04%) and 12 daycare of children services (0.3%) evaluated at this level. In 7.9% of childminders and 11.7% of daycare of children services, we found the quality was adequate or lower in at least one quality theme. In terms of each type of daycare of children service, playgroups and crèches had the highest levels of services with at least one grade of adequate, weak or unsatisfactory (around 20% of services, or 14 crèches and 40 playgroups). Nurseries (9.9%, 238 services) and children and family centres (4.0%, 6 services) had the lowest levels of services with at least one grade of adequate, weak or unsatisfactory. For further detail, see table 8 above and supporting table 34.

4.2 Grading analysis by service categories

Consistently over time, children and family centres have had the highest evaluations of all early learning and childcare service types, with most childminders and nurseries also consistently found to be of high quality.

Childminders

In around 97% of childminders, the quality of care and support and the quality of environment was found to be good or better. We only evaluate the quality of staffing in childminders who employ assistants, and this year we have seen an increase in the number of childminders using assistants (with 430 childminders (7.9%) evaluated against the quality of staffing theme this year, compared to 375 (6.6%) last year). The rate of childminders found to be good or better for the quality of staffing theme also increased this year, from 90.1% last year to 93.7% at 31 December 2017. However, the rate of childminders that employ assistants found to be good or better in all quality themes is slightly lower than the national average, with 89.8% of services achieving this standard (compared to 92.1% nationally as at December 2017).

In only 0.6% of childminders was the quality found to be weak or unsatisfactory for at least one theme; a slight improvement compared to 1.0% last year.

Of all types of early learning and childcare services, childminding services had the second highest set of evaluations behind children and family centres.

Children and family centres

Children and family centres had the highest proportion of all daycare services found to be very good or excellent in all themes (57.0%) and of those found to be good or better in all themes (96.0%). No children and family centres were evaluated as weak or unsatisfactory in all quality themes and only 4.0% (6 services) received a grade of adequate or lower in any of the quality themes.

Children and family centres had the highest proportion of strongly performing services in each of the quality themes. In more than 80% of children and family services, the quality of care and support (86.1%) and the quality of staffing (84.1%) was found to be very good or excellent. In over 70% of services, the quality of the environment (77.5%) and the quality of management and leadership (72.2%) were evaluated as very good or excellent.

Nurseries

Nursery services also had higher than average performance in terms of services found to be very good or excellent for all themes (41.8%) and of services evaluated as good or better for all themes (90.1%). The rate of services that had at least one theme evaluated at adequate or below was correspondingly lower at (9.9%).

While quality is generally high, there are some differences in grading depending on sector. Local authority services had the highest proportion of services evaluated as good or better for all themes (94.5%) followed by voluntary/not for profit services (88.2%) and private nurseries (81.5%). This year, the proportion of these high-quality services has increased slightly in local authority and voluntary/not for profit services, and decreased slightly in private services compared to 2016. Of local authority nurseries, 5.5% were found to be adequate or lower in at least one quality theme. In comparison, 18.5% of private services and 11.8% of voluntary/not for profit services had any quality themes evaluated at adequate or lower.

Both local authority and private nursery services improved on the proportion of their services found to be unsatisfactory or weak for at least one quality theme. However, in voluntary/not for profit nurseries the rate of services with at least one quality theme found to be unsatisfactory or weak has increased (from 1.7% in 2016 to 3.2% in 2017). See table 8 above and supporting table 36d).

Overall, 66.8% of nurseries were evaluated as very good or excellent for the quality of care and support theme, ranging from 52.7% in private nurseries to 73.4% in local authority nurseries. In terms of poorly performing services, only 0.6% of all nurseries were found to be weak or unsatisfactory for the quality of care and support. This varied by sector, ranging from 0.3% in local authority nurseries to 1.1% in private and voluntary/not for profit services. In all three sectors there was a slight improvement compared to last year.

For the other three quality themes, the patterns in terms of where the good and the poor performance lies was similar to the quality of care and support theme. Supporting tables 35d to 35g show a detailed breakdown of grading by theme in nurseries.

There were no considerable differences in grading patterns for different sizes of nurseries. Across all nurseries, the largest nurseries had a slightly lower proportion of services with all themes found to be good or better compared to the smallest nurseries. However, there was not a strong correlation between size and quality. The differences consisted of a fairly narrow range between 85.8% of larger

nurseries (61-100 places) with all quality themes found to be good or better to 92.9% of smaller nurseries (21-30 places).

For more detailed information on the quality of different service types, refer to supporting data tables 34 to 37.

The quality of nurseries that are provided by independent schools (sometimes called private or fee-paying schools) and local authority nursery schools (nurseries run by a local authority that are not nursery classes as part of a primary school) exceeds the national average. Across all local authority nursery schools, 57.6% had all quality themes found to be at very good or excellent, 94.2% were evaluated as at least good in all quality themes and only 0.5% had all themes evaluated as unsatisfactory or weak.

In nursery services that are part of an independent school however, the difference in quality is much more apparent (note however that the number of independent school nurseries is small, with only 19 graded services to consider). All (100.0%) of the independent school nurseries were found to be good or better in every quality theme, with 84.2% rated very good or excellent in all themes. All independent school nurseries were found to be very good or excellent for the quality of care and support theme. In the quality of environment and quality of staffing themes, 94.7% of independent school nurseries were evaluated as very good or excellent, as were 89.5% of services for the quality of management and leadership theme.

Tables 9 and 10 show a comparison between local authority nursery schools, independent school nurseries and all nursery services nationally in terms of their quality theme evaluations.

Table 9: Evaluations in local authority nursery schools and independent school nurseries, as at 31 December 2017

	Number of (graded) services	All themes found to be unsatisfactory or weak		All themes found to be good or better		All themes found to be very good or excellent	
		Number of services	% of services	Number of services	% of services	Number of services	% of services
All nursery services	2,403	8	0.3%	2,165	90.1%	1,004	41.8%
Local authority nursery schools	191	1	0.5%	180	94.2%	110	57.6%
Independent school nurseries	19	0	0.0%	19	100.0%	16	84.2%

Table 10: Evaluations at quality theme level in local authority nursery schools and independent school nurseries, as at 31 December 2017

	Quality of care and support		Quality of environment		Quality of staffing		Quality of management and leadership	
	% of services found to be good or better	% of services found to be very good or excellent	% of services found to be good or better	% of services found to be very good or excellent	% of services found to be good or better	% of services found to be very good or excellent	% of services found to be good or better	% of services found to be very good or excellent
All nursery services	95.3%	66.8%	97.0%	60.8%	95.1%	64.9%	92.5%	55.8%
Local authority nursery schools	97.4%	77.0%	96.3%	74.4%	97.9%	83.3%	96.9%	70.2%
Independent school nurseries	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	94.7%	100.0%	94.7%	100.0%	89.5%

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 lower quality services. Of all out of school services, 25.0% were evaluated as very good or excellent in all quality themes and 0.4% were evaluated as weak or unsatisfactory for all themes.

In terms of out of school care services found to be good or better in all quality themes, there has been improvement this year compared to 2016. Overall, 83.9% of out of school care services were found to be good or better in all quality themes (an improvement compared to 79.4% in 2016). However, there are some differences by provider sector. Local authority out of school care services had the highest proportion of services rated good or better (93.5%) followed by voluntary/not for profit services (85.7%) and private out of school care services (77.9%).

In local authority out of school care services, 6.5% were found to be adequate or lower in at least one quality theme, which is a lower percentage than the 22.1% of private services and 14.3% of voluntary/not for profit services with similar evaluations. However, all of these rates have improved compared to 2016 (10.6%, 26.1% and 19.3% respectively).

Playgroups

81.4% of playgroups were found to be good or better for all themes, which was lower than daycare of children services overall. The proportion of services with all themes evaluated as good or better has decreased slightly compared to the 83.8% seen in 2016. However, very few playgroups (six services) were found to be weak or unsatisfactory or weak in any themes.

5. Complaints in early learning and childcare services

In the year up to 31 December 2017, the Care Inspectorate completed 469 complaint investigations about early learning and childcare services. Most of these were about daycare of children services (70.8%) and the remaining 29.2% were about childminders.

Table 11: Complaints in early learning and childcare services, between 1 January and 31 December 2017

Early learning and childcare service	Complaint* 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	137	65	47.4%	60	12.0	1.9
Daycare of children	332	137	41.3%	119	37.0	0.8
Total	469	202	43.1%	179	–	–

*Count of individual complaint cases. Each complaint case may have multiple concerns investigated.

We upheld 137 complaints about daycare of children services, which was 41.3% of the investigations completed. This is lower than the 169 upheld complaints (50.6%) seen last year. We upheld 65 complaints about childminders (47.4% of complaints investigated) an increase compared to the 47 upheld complaints (36.4%) last year.

Of the complaints upheld about daycare of children services, the majority were about private nursery services (63.5%) followed by local authority nurseries (11.7%) and private out of school care services (6.6%).

The rates of complaints upheld in childminders and daycare of children services are relatively low compared to most other care services types that are registered with the Care Inspectorate. For example, in care homes for older people (about which we receive the most complaints) 440.6 complaints were upheld per 1,000 services compared to 12.0 complaints upheld per 1,000 childminding services and 37.0 per 1,000 services in daycare of children services.

Each complaint case investigated 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 around conditions of registration); and communication (between the childminder and children's families).
- Of the complaints we upheld about daycare of children services, the main reasons for complaints were: general health and welfare; staff related complaints (staff levels, staff training and qualifications); communication between staff and people experiencing care, their relatives and/or carers; and policies and procedures.

These most common reasons for complaint are consistent with those seen last year. For more information on complaints, see supporting tables 38a, 38b and 38c.

6. Enforcement involving early learning and childcare services

Where a service does not make improvements that we require, we can take legal action by issuing an enforcement notice. If necessary, we can take steps to close a service as a last resort (subject to an appeal to a sheriff) but these cases are rare. We served a total of four childminders, two nurseries and two out of school care services with enforcement notices over the year to 31 December 2017 to secure improvements in care where serious failings were identified. None of these services received more than one enforcement notice in the year. This does not include technical enforcement procedures (for example, to cancel the registration of a childminder who has moved away from their previous address and not notified us). We served fewer services with enforcement notices in 2017 compared to the previous year. In 2016, we issued enforcement notices to ten childminders, three nurseries and two out of school care services.

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 variations in the numbers of early learning and childcare services available and in the number of children registered with services across local authorities in Scotland.

The local authorities with fewest early learning and childcare services per population (0-15 years) were Glasgow City and the neighbouring local authorities West Dunbartonshire, Renfrewshire, Inverclyde, North Lanarkshire and South Lanarkshire. Other urban areas including City of Edinburgh and Aberdeen City also had below average rates of early learning and childcare services per 10,000 population aged 0-15 years. Generally, rural areas such as Highland, Angus, Orkney Islands and Na h-Eileanan Siar had the highest rate of early learning and childcare services per 10,000 population aged 0-15 years.

These clear distinctions between urban and rural areas in terms of the number of services aren't so clear when considering the rate of children registered per 100 population aged 0-15 years old. Inverclyde, North Lanarkshire and Na h-Eileanan Siar had some of the lowest rates of children registered with early learning and childcare services, which is a mixture of urban and rural areas. East Renfrewshire, City of Edinburgh and Midlothian (all mostly urban areas) have the highest rates of children registered with early learning and childcare services. For more detail across other local authority areas, see supporting table 6.

The remote rural island authorities (Na h-Eileanan Siar, Orkney Islands and Shetland Islands) had the lowest average number of children per service, with fewer than 30 children registered per service. City of Edinburgh, East Ayrshire and East Renfrewshire on average had 75 or more children registered per service.

7.2 Urban and rural areas

There was a higher rate of early learning and childcare services in small towns and rural areas compared to urban areas (rate per population aged 0-15 years old) although the number of services

was higher in urban areas than in rural areas. The capacity in daycare of children services per 10,000 population (0-15 years old) decreased slightly overall compared to 2016, due to the increase in the projected population. Although there was a small increase in the rate in remote small towns, the rates in other areas all decreased compared to 2016.

Childminders

The lowest rates of childminders per population were in large urban areas and the highest rates were in accessible small towns. The smallest average capacity was in large urban areas (6.0 registered places per service) increasing up to 6.3 registered places per service in the most rural areas.

Nurseries

The lowest rates of nursery services per 10,000 population were in urban areas and the highest rates were in rural areas. The average size (in terms of registered maximum capacity) of services was largest in urban areas and smallest in rural areas: the average size of services in urban areas was more than twice the size of remote rural services.

There are clear differences in the provision of nursery services by sector and in urban and rural areas. In the largest urban areas, local authorities and private providers supply a roughly equal amount of services, with each providing around 45% of services. For private providers, this is their highest proportion of provision in any area. The proportion of services run by the private sector decreases through the more rural areas, down to only 6.6% of services in the most remote rural areas being privately run. The opposite is true for the public sector. In the most rural areas, the rate of services run by local authorities only increases, peaking at 86.2% of nursery provision in remote rural areas. Local authorities have a statutory duty to provide a nursery place for all 3- and 4-year-olds. While private and voluntary/not for profit nurseries can choose whether sufficient numbers of children make a service viable in a remote location, this isn't the case for local authorities who have to provide places. This means the local authority plays a crucial role in ensuring provision across all parts of Scotland.

Numbers of nursery services broken down by urban-rural categories and sector is illustrated in supporting table 15b.

Out of school care services

The highest rate of services per 10,000 population was in large urban areas with the lowest rates in the more remote rural areas. The areas with the highest average number of places were the large urban areas and accessible small towns (49.3 and 45.6 average places respectively) with the smallest services on average being in remote rural areas (24.5 places per service). The private and voluntary/not for profit sectors operate most of the out of school care services available, with local authorities operating only 13.0% of services nationally.

Playgroups

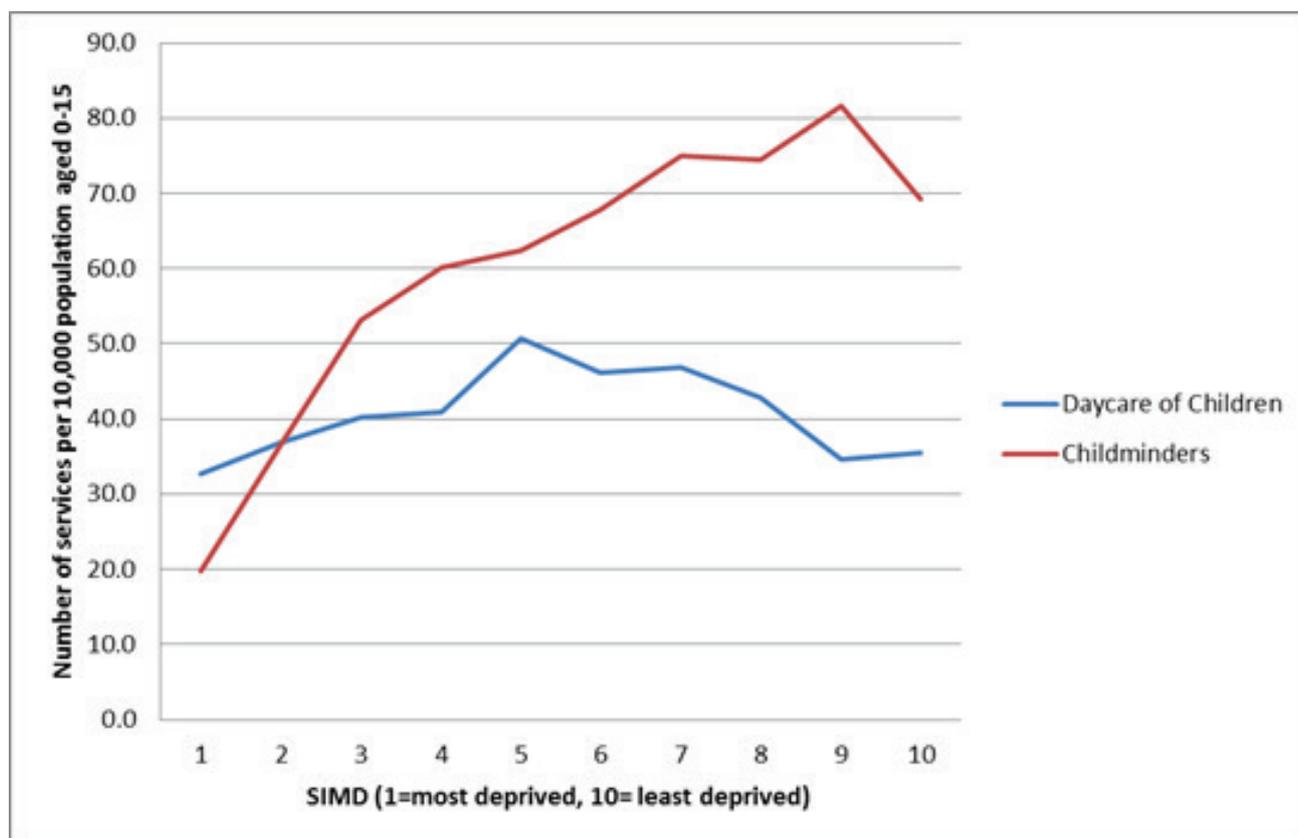
The highest rates of playgroup services per 10,000 population were in the most remote rural areas (5.5 services per 10,000 population aged 0-15 in remote rural areas and 4.8 per 10,000 in accessible rural areas). The lowest rates were in the largest urban areas (1.2 services per 10,000 population). In terms of the average size of the services, there was only a small variation between different urban and rural areas with the average size between 19 and 24 places per service.

7.3 Scottish Index of multiple deprivation (SIMD) areas (2016 SIMD)

There was some correlation between the rate of childminding services per 10,000 population (0-15 year olds) and levels of deprivation. There were 69.2 childminders per 10,000 population in the 10% least deprived areas whereas there were only 19.7 childminders per 10,000 population in the 10% most deprived areas.

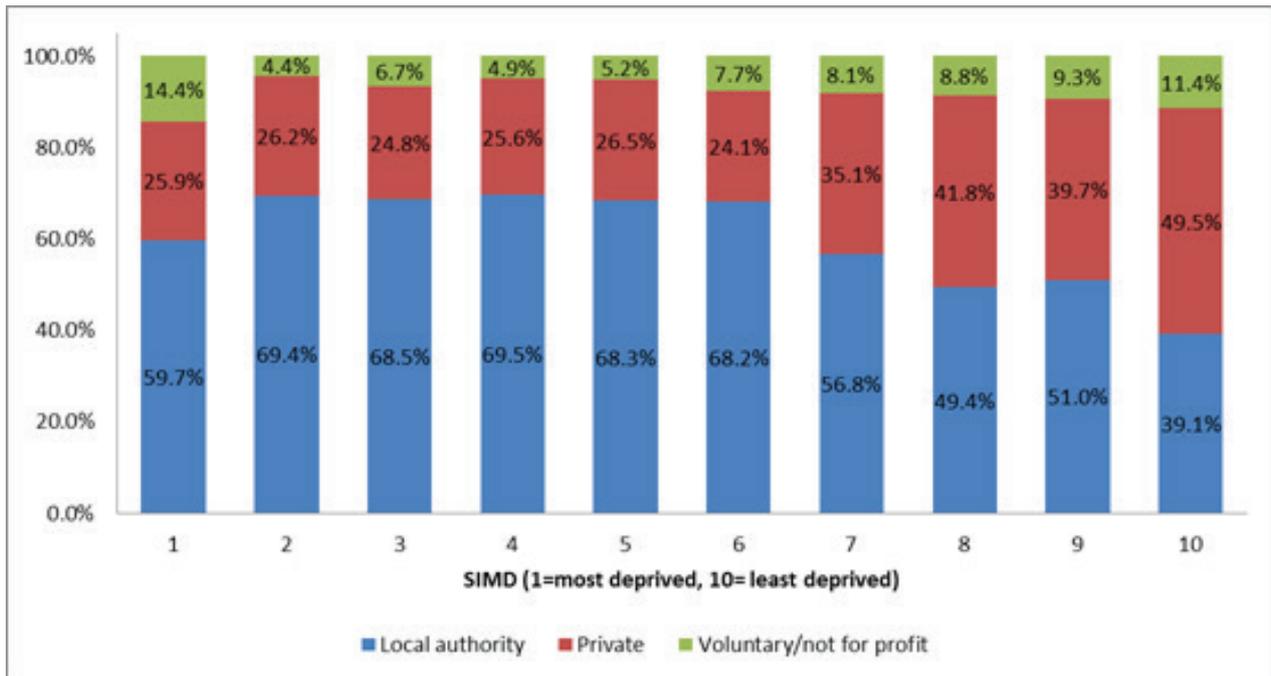
There was no such correlation for daycare of children services overall, the rate of services in the most and least deprived areas was similar with a slightly increased rate in the mid-ranked areas. This is illustrated in figure 12 below (see also supporting table 16).

Figure 12: Number of services registered per 10,000 population aged 0-15 by SIMD deciles



While there was no connection between the deprivation levels and the rates of nurseries overall, there were differences between the sectors providing nursery services. The 30% least deprived areas had the lowest rate of local authority nurseries while having the highest proportion of private nursery services. This is illustrated in figure 13 (see also supporting table 15b).

Figure 13: Nursery services operating by SIMD deciles and sector

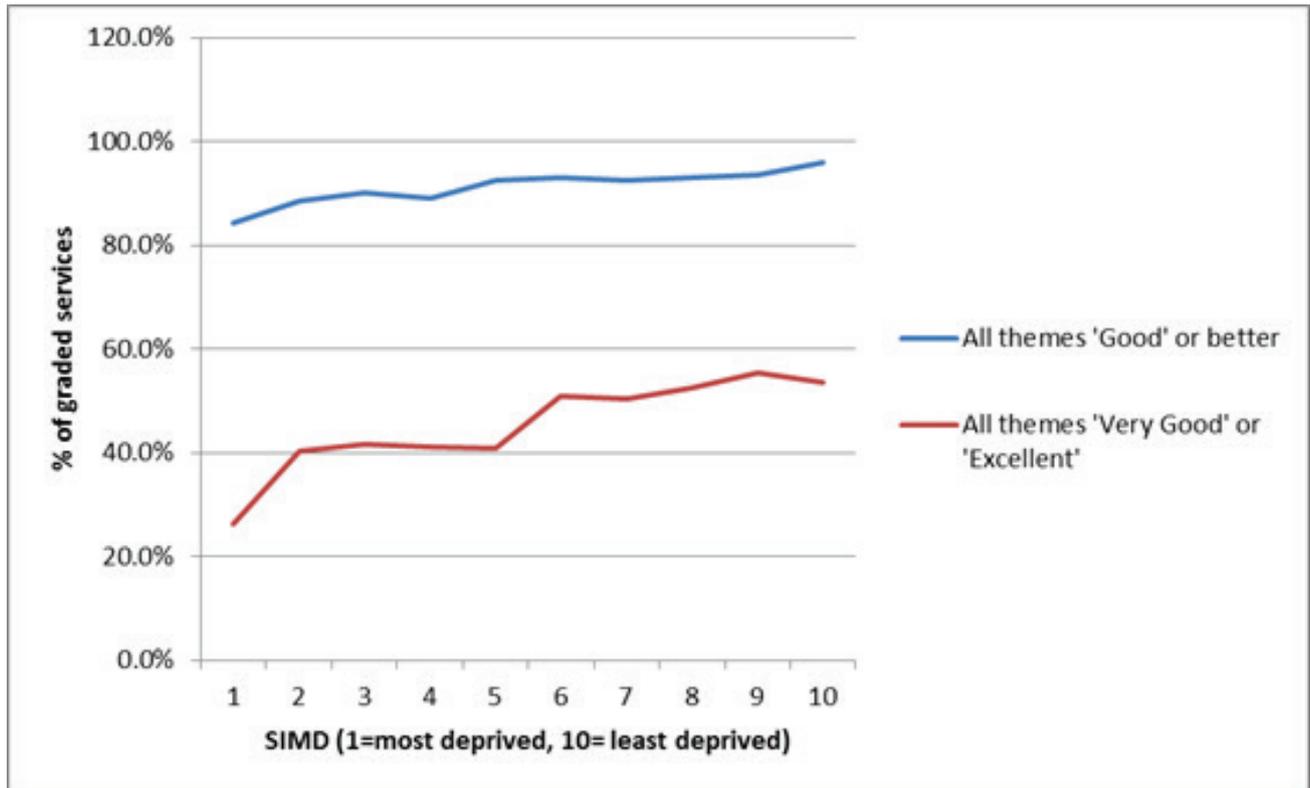


There was a similar prevalence of private services in least deprived areas for out of school care services; the 30% least deprived areas had the highest proportion of privately run services and the lowest proportion of voluntary/not for profit out of school care services.

Children and family centres were predominantly based in more deprived areas, with around 60% of these services located in the 30% most deprived areas (see supporting table 15c for more detail).

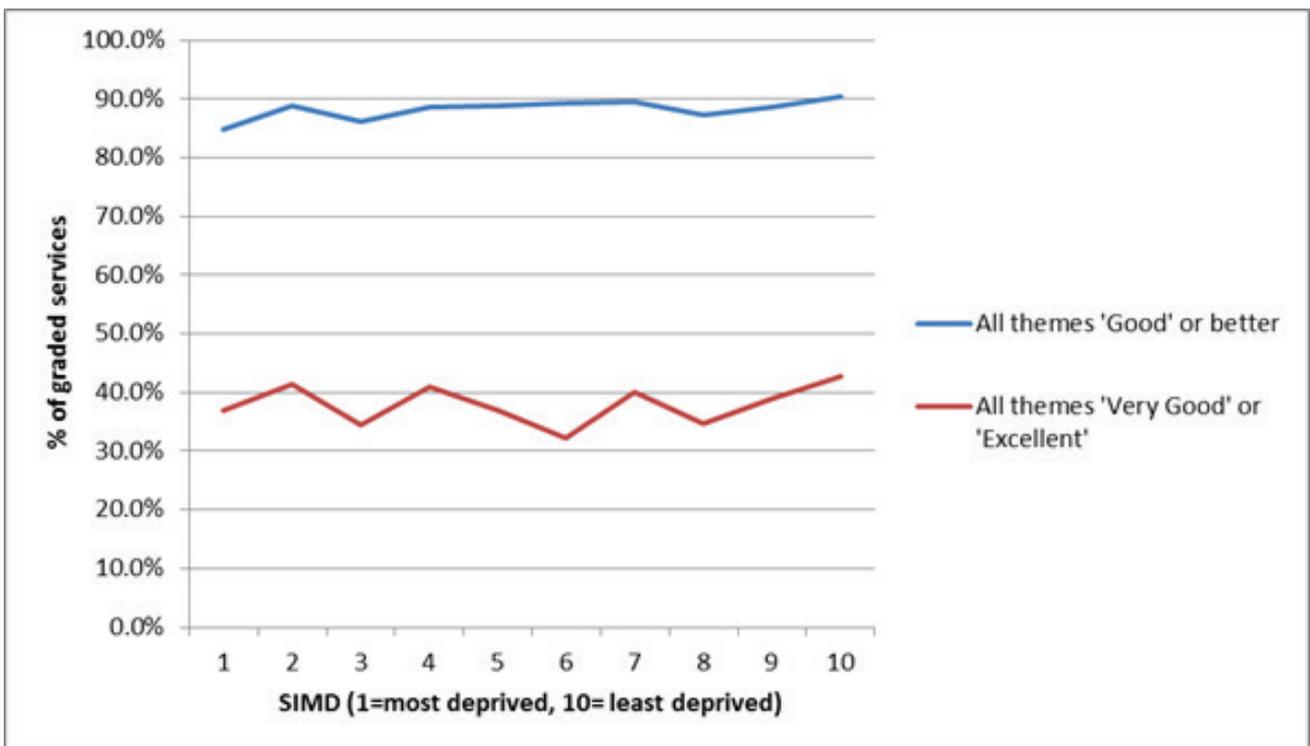
There were some differences between levels of deprivation and quality of services in childminding services. The rate of childminders found to be good or better for all themes increased as the level of deprivation decreased. In the 10% most deprived areas 84.2% of childminders were rated good or better, while in the 10% least deprived areas this increased to 95.9% (both of these rates increased this year compared to 2016). The difference was also apparent when considering services found to be very good or excellent; 26.2% of services in the 10% most deprived areas compared to 53.5% of services in the 10% least deprived areas were deemed to be at this high level. Figure 14 below shows the increase in the rate of services with found to be performing well as deprivation decreases.

Figure 14: Evaluations of childminding services by SIMD



In daycare of children services, the variation in quality across different levels of deprivation is not as broad as in childminding services and as a result there is no correlation linking quality to deprivation. The rate of daycare of children services found to be good or better fluctuates between around 88% and 92% depending on deprivation level. See figure 15 below for an illustration of the trend.

Figure 15: Evaluations of daycare of children services by SIMD



Although there was no clear evidence of a social gradient in services found to be good or better across all four quality themes, when each quality theme is considered individually there are clear differences between areas of greatest and least deprivation. Figure 16 below shows the rate of services found to be good or better in each quality theme by SIMD decile. In all quality themes, a higher proportion of services were evaluated as good or better in the least deprived areas compared to areas with higher levels of deprivation.

Figure 16: Evaluations of daycare of children services by SIMD, services found to be good or better by quality theme

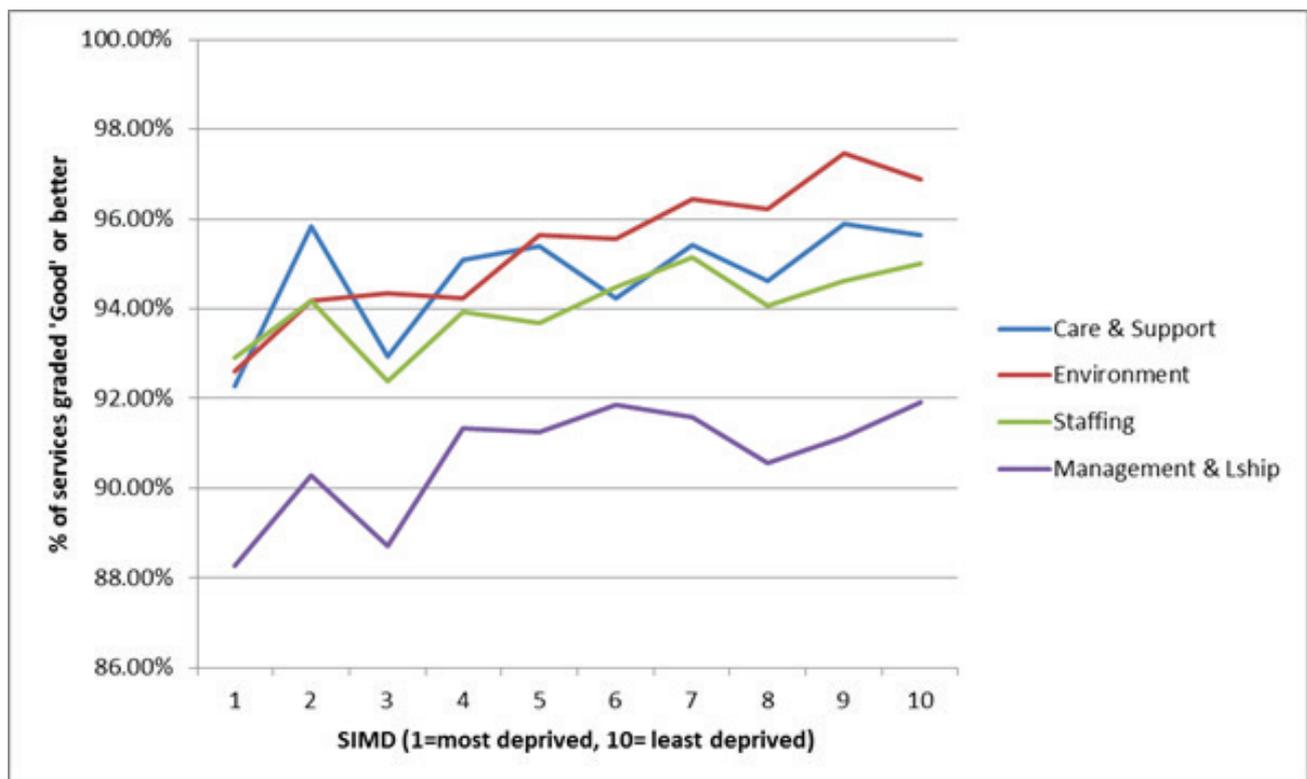
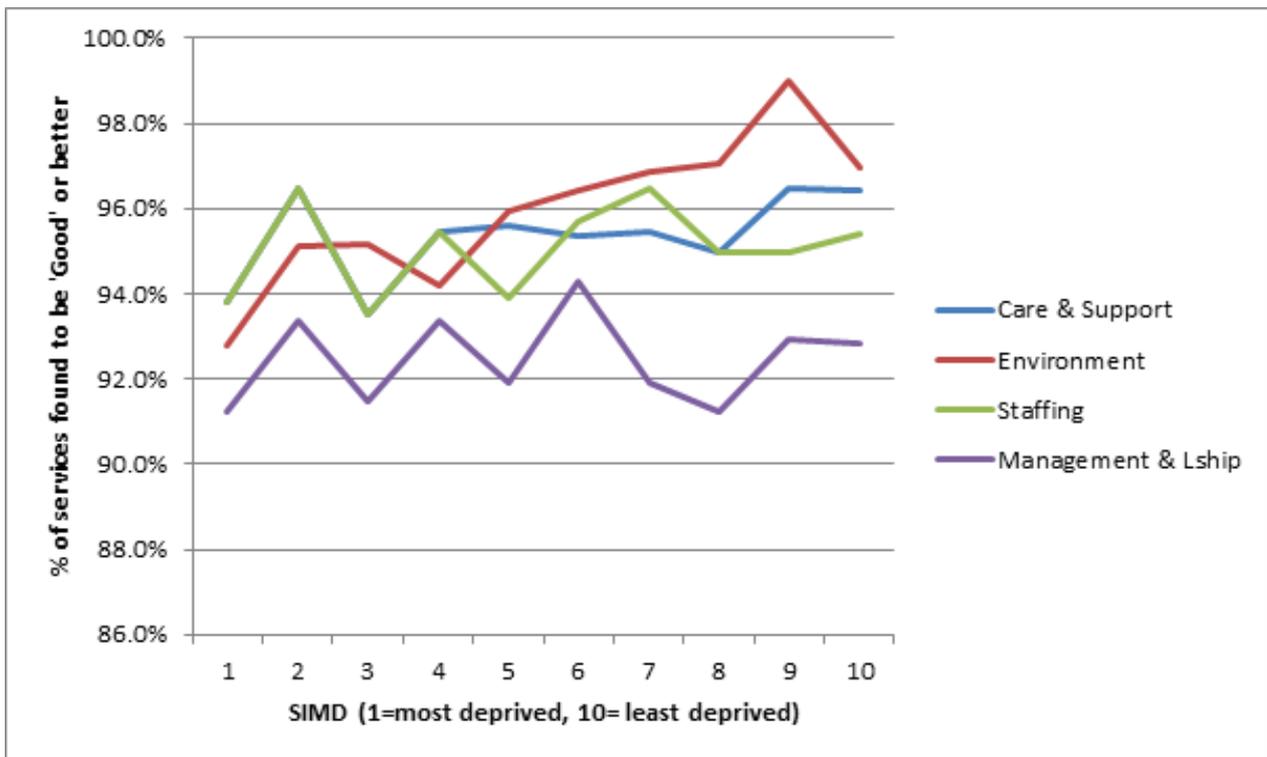


Figure 16 shows that quality of environment and quality of management and leadership improve at the fastest rate as deprivation decreases, with quality of environment having the largest difference between the most and least deprived areas. Quality of staffing shows the least variation by SIMD, and the smallest difference between the two extremes of the SIMD scale.

Looking specifically at nurseries, we see a similar pattern. While there's no relationship between levels of deprivation and overall quality (in terms of services found to be good or better in all themes) Figure 17 shows the proportion of nurseries found to be good or better in each quality theme.

Figure 17: Evaluations of nursery services by SIMD, services found to be good or better by quality theme



When considering nurseries in isolation from other daycare services, the fluctuation between deprivation levels is much greater. Quality of environment is again very high in the three lowest areas of deprivation, with the fastest improvement in quality as deprivation decreases. The difference in quality of staffing and quality of management and leadership between the most and least deprived areas is the lowest of any of the four themes.



8. Service provision

8.1 Provision for different age groups

Childminders, children and family centres and private nurseries continue to be the main service types offering care for children under two years of age.

- Childminding services typically cater for the widest range of age groups, with over 90% of childminders offering a service for children aged from 2 to 11 years old.
- Children and family centres provision was mostly focused on young children up to the age of 5.
- In contrast, holiday playschemes offered a service mainly for children aged 5 and older.
- Crèches were offered mainly for children up to 5 years of age.
- Playgroups predominantly catered for children aged between 2 and 4 years old.
- Nursery provision varied by provider sector. Around four out of five private nurseries offered a service for babies aged under 1, while around a third of voluntary/not for profit nurseries offered this service. Less than 5% of local authority nurseries catered for children aged 1 year or younger. Local authority services mainly provided a service for 3- and 4-year-olds, while private and voluntary/not for profit services catered for a wider age range from 2 to 5 years. In addition, around 20% of private and voluntary/not for profit nurseries could also offer a service to children aged 6 to 11 years old.
- Out of school care services were mainly provided for children aged 5 to 11, but around two-thirds of services also offered a service for children aged 4 and children aged 12 and over.

For further detailed information, please see supporting tables 28a – 28c.

8.2 Languages and service philosophies

The majority of childminders provided a service only in English. In 0.6% of childminders the service is delivered using either a mix of English and Gaelic or in Gaelic only (Gaelic only in less than five services). 0.6% of services could offer British Sign Language and 1.7% could deliver the service in another language, most commonly Polish, French, German, Arabic or Mandarin, and also communication languages such as Makaton and Sign-along.

The rates of services using languages other than English is higher in daycare services than in childminders. 1.9% (70 services) of daycare of children services delivered their service in a combination of English and Gaelic or only in Gaelic (Gaelic only in 30 services) and 3.8% (140 services) could provide the service in another language. The provision of Gaelic and other languages has seen an increase in the last two years. The most common other languages used were Polish, Spanish, French, Urdu and Punjabi in addition to communication languages such as Makaton and Sign-along. In a slight increase compared to last year, 1.6% of services (compared to 1.3% in 2016) could offer their service in British Sign Language. See supporting table 29 for further information.

At 31 December 2017, 0.8% of nurseries (19 services) told us that they use the outdoor-based approach to delivering the service. 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. In addition, 0.5% of out of school care services and 1.8% of playgroups (less than five services in each instance) also told us they use an outdoor-based approach.

In daycare of children services, 1.9% (71 services) followed a Suzuki/Montessori philosophy and 0.5% (24 services) followed a Steiner philosophy. Both these rates have reduced slightly compared to 2016. See supporting table 29 for further information.

8.3 School term and holiday availability

In term time

The number of services offering longer opening times to cover breakfast and after school hours has increased compared to 2016.

Overall, 69.2% of services offered care before school hours. This has increased from 65.0% in 2016. The proportion of services that offered a service before school times varied by service type and was most common in childminders, private nurseries and out of school care services. Around 25% of local authority nurseries provided an early morning service. This is considerably lower than the rate in private nurseries (65.9%) however, the early morning provision in local authority nurseries has seen a 23.3% increase in 2017 (an increase of 70 services).

The rate of childminders offering early morning provision increased to 88.6% this year (from 85.0%). The rate of out of school care services providing an early morning service remained at 44.7%, consistent with 2016.

Eighty-two percent of services provided care after school hours, a slight increase from 81.3% in 2016. Slight increases in service provision after school hours could be seen across all service types. Almost all childminders (97.7%) provided their service after school hours, while just over half (51.3%) of all nurseries offered this too (88.7% of private nurseries, compared to 30.6% of local authority nurseries). For further detailed information, please see supporting tables 30a – 30c.

During school holidays

In general, the proportion of services offering a service during the school holidays has remained similar to the levels reported in 2016.

Local authority run nurseries and playgroups had the lowest proportion of services offered during the holidays, with only around one in twelve services providing this (8.8% and 8.7% respectively). In contrast, the majority of privately operated nurseries (93.6%) provided a service during the school holidays.

43.4% of all early learning and childcare services offered a service before 8am, with 72.6% of services operating during working hours during school holidays. These rates are similar to those seen in 2016.

Holiday playschemes, childminders, children and family centres and crèches had the highest levels of provision during the school holidays (during working hours in addition to evenings and weekends).

See supporting tables 30a-30c for more information.

8.4 Early learning and childcare sessions

The proportion of daycare of children services that offer whole-day sessions has been increasing year on year, and this trend has continued in 2017. Fifty-eight point two percent of services overall and 61.0% of nurseries offered whole-day sessions or the choice of whole- or part-day sessions. See table 12 below for the trend by year.

Table 12: Sessions available between 2013 and 2016 in daycare of children services and nurseries

Daycare of children services

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
whole-day only	3.2%	3.0%	3.1%	3.2%	3.5%
whole-day or part-day	44.0%	45.7%	47.7%	51.4%	54.7%
part-day only	51.8%	50.8%	48.6%	44.5%	40.8%

All nurseries

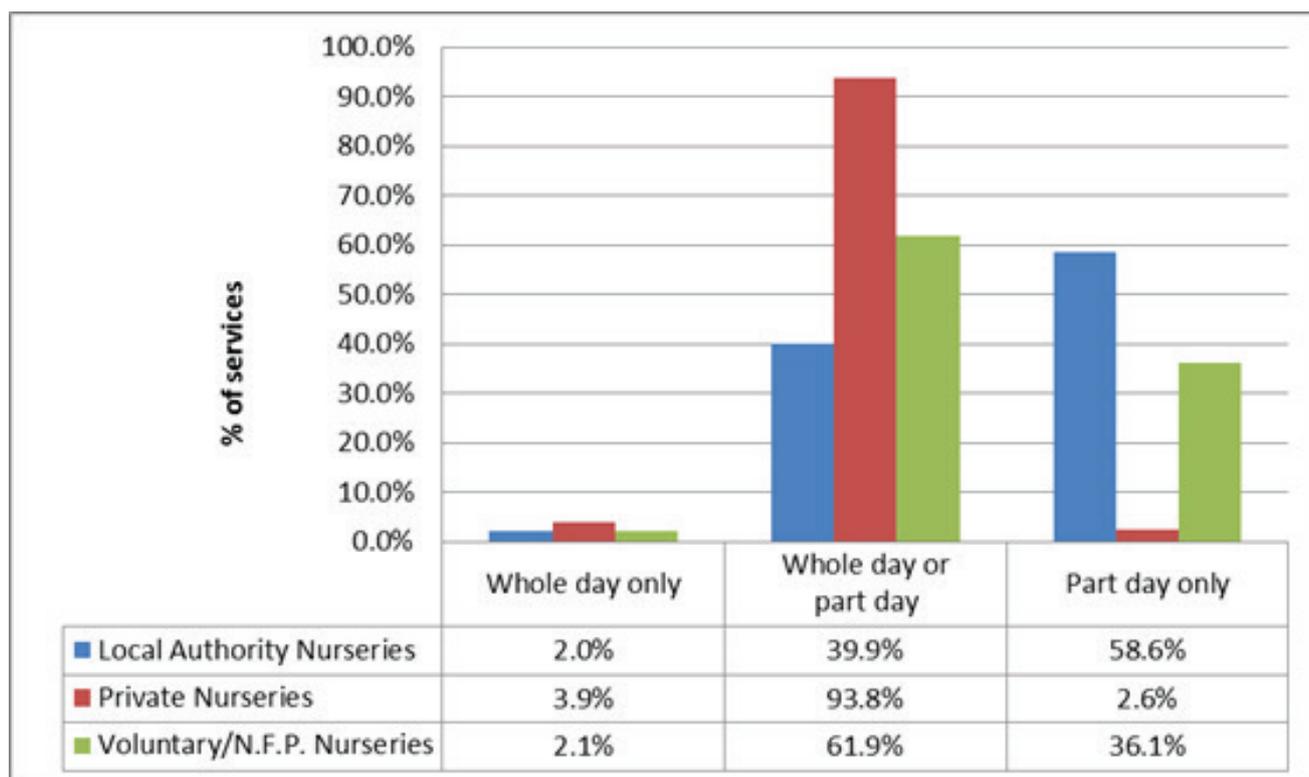
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
whole-day only	1.8%	1.4%	1.6%	1.6%	2.4%
whole-day or part-day	44.8%	46.4%	49.5%	54.3%	58.6%
part-day only	52.7%	51.7%	48.9%	43.8%	39.2%

The increase in the availability of whole-day sessions was seen in most types of daycare service including:

- almost all private nurseries (97.7%, an increase from 96.3% in 2016)
- 41.9% of local authority nurseries (compared to 34.1% in 2016)
- 18.3% of playgroups offering whole-day sessions; an increase compared to the 12.1% in 2016.

The sessions offered in nurseries varied widely depending on the sector providing the service. For example, the majority of private nurseries typically offered part days or full days, with only a small minority only providing full days or **only** providing part days. In contrast, most local authority run services offered part day sessions only, with a very small minority offering only whole days. Figure 12 below illustrates the variation across sectors.

Figure 18: Sessions available in nurseries by sector, as at 31 December 2017



Some services also offer shorter, flexible sessions instead of strictly providing full or part days. Most services offering short, flexible sessions also offered whole days and part days too. There have been increases in the rate of services offering these flexible sessions compared to last year in most daycare of children service types including:

- 53.3% of crèches (compared to 41.1% in 2016)
- 33.1% of children and family centres (31.1% in 2016)
- 15.0% of nurseries (11.8% in 2016)
- 23.1% of private nurseries (19.0% in 2016)
- 10.7% of local authority nurseries (7.3% in 2016).

See supporting tables 31a and 31b for further information.

8.5 Provision of meals and snacks

Most childminders (92.6%) continue to provide meals in their service (similar to the 92.4% in 2016). The meals were provided by the service (19.5%) by parents only (51.2%) or by both (21.7%). Almost all childminders (99.1%) provided snacks for the children in the services, which is a slight increase compared to 2016 (98.9%).

Around 48% of daycare of children services provided meals in the service (whether by the service alone or by parents or both). This is an increase compared to 44% in 2016. This increase in the provision of meals is likely linked to the increase in opening hours and the increase in whole-day sessions offered. More services are offering meals as more children are attending for longer sessions.

The provision of meals varied between different types of daycare services. It ranged from 16.3% in out of school care services and 22.8% in playgroups, to 58.6% in nurseries and 72.8% in children and family centres.

In 58.1% of private nurseries where meals were served, the meals were provided solely by the service. In local authority nurseries, the provision was split between service only provision (39.0% of those serving meals) and a combination of food provided by the service and by parents (47.5%). In half of voluntary/not for profit nurseries, food was provided by parents only (50.0%).

Around two-fifths of local authority nurseries served meals in the service. This has increased from 31.4% in 2016 to 39.3% in 2017. Meals were served in 95.1% of private nurseries and 61.9% of voluntary/not for profit nurseries (whether supplied by the service, parents or both).

Almost all (around 99%) of daycare of children services provided snacks for the children. See supporting tables 32a and 32b for further information.



Technical appendix

Appendix 1: 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 report 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:

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Children>

This report is about the provision and use of daycare of children and childminders registered with the Care Inspectorate as at 31 December 2017. 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 to 2016 are available at: <http://www.careinspectorate.com/index.php/statistics-and-analysis>
- The statistics in this report are produced using information from the latest Care Inspectorate annual returns, which asked providers for information about the previous calendar year (1 January 2017 to 31 December 2017) and the Care Inspectorate service list (as at 31 December 2017). Figures relating to previous years are taken from our reports on early learning and childcare statistics publications for 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016.
- Our inspectors use the annual returns when planning care service inspections and carrying out risk assessments. Some of the information in the annual 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 us with the information needed to help plan and carry out inspections effectively. Although services registered after 1 October 2017 do not have to submit an annual return for December 2017, we encourage them to do so.
- Of the 9,127 childcare services registered with the Care Inspectorate at 31 December 2017, 8,236 (90%) submitted an annual return, matching the 90% response rate seen in the previous year. The annual return data has been imputed for those services that did not submit an annual return (see below). For this reason, some of the supporting 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 orange coloured text.

Appendix 2: Data sources

The Care Inspectorate service list (as at 31 December 2017) has been used to provide figures on:

- the total number of registered daycare of children and childminding services
- whether services were active or inactive (see Appendix 3 – Data cleaning for more information on inactive services)
- 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.

We have used Care Inspectorate annual returns (as at 31 December 2017) 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 2017
- whether daycare of children services provide funded places as at 31 December 2017
- the number of children registered with services that use the services for out of school care as at 31 December 2017
- the age groups catered for and term-time/holiday-time availability of the service
- whether the service was available for full-day or part-day sessions
- whether meals or snacks were provided by the service or by the parents
- the languages and service philosophies used by services
- characteristics and qualifications of childminders.

The 2016 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 of 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 urban/rural category to the postcode location of each childcare service. The urban/rural categories do not reflect the locations where children using the services live.

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

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/About/Methodology/UrbanRuralClassification>

The National Records of Scotland mid-year population estimates (2016) have been used to calculate rates. Further information about the population estimates is available here:

<https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/statistics-and-data/statistics/statistics-by-theme/population/population-estimates/mid-year-population-estimates/mid-2016>

Appendix 3: 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 2017 but the service reported working zero hours and recorded zero number of users, the status is treated as 'inactive' for the purposes of the analysis (therefore the number of active childminders published in this report may differ from that in other Care Inspectorate publications and 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 into account.

Summary of annual return response rates, December 2017

Main service	Response rate at December 2017
Childminding	86%
Children and family centre	91%
Crèche	93%
Holiday playscheme	87%
Nursery	97%
Out of school care	98%
Playgroup	97%
All services	90%
All services (excl. childminding services)	97%

We took the following approaches to handling missing data:

A. Imputation of missing data using historic data

Where a daycare of children service did not submit an annual return for 2017, but submitted a return for either 2016 or 2015, the information submitted in the most recent historic annual return was used to impute the missing data for 2017. Where a service re-registered (for example, due to a change in ownership or service provider) and information was missing for 2017, the most recent historic information from the previously registered service was used (if an annual return was submitted in 2016 or 2015). For childminders, the information from annual returns from 2014, 2015 and 2016 were used in the same way.

B. Imputation of missing data where no historic data is available

Where a service has not provided any information in 2016 or 2015 (or 2014 for childminders) or where a service was newly registered in 2017 (and not a re-registration) missing data has been estimated.

To estimate missing data, we took into account the following variables: service size; service location (local authority area and level of deprivation) and service category (nursery, playgroup and so on). We then estimated the missing data using average values from services based on the above criteria. No estimates were used for new data items, the information for which is based on submitted annual returns only.

C. Testing the impact of imputing data

To help assess the impact of imputing missing data, some of the final results have been compared to estimates obtained from using data from completed annual returns only (that is ignoring any missing data).

For the number of children registered with childminders at 31 December 2017, the results using imputation (as used in the publication supporting tables) produce an estimate of 33,659. This is higher than the non-estimated figure of 29,960 (based on completed annual returns only).

For daycare of children services (excluding crèche services) the estimated results after imputing (as used in the publication supporting tables) produce an estimate of 219,621 children registered with daycare of children services. This is higher than the non-estimated figure of 215,596 (based on completed annual returns only).



Appendix 4: Changes to data items collected in 2017

Changes to data collected on services providing funded ELC places

We removed the question asking for numbers of children receiving ELC funded places by age group this year. As noted in 2016's publication, due to issues with the quality of the data we have made the decision to stop collecting this level of detail. However, information on the number of children receiving funded ELC places is published by the Scottish Government annually.

Where we ask services if they provide ELC funded places, this year we changed the answer options from a Yes/No response to separate answers based on the age groups that funded places are offered to. These were:

- The service provides funded places for 2-year-old children and children aged 3 and over
- The service ONLY provides funded places for children aged 3 and over
- The service ONLY provides funded places for 2-year-old children.

The responses to this question are summarised in chapter 3.

This year, for the first time, we asked the question 'Do you provide funded early learning and childcare places in partnership with a local authority?' in the childminding annual return. However due to issues with the quality of the data received (including missing data and apparent confusion around the question from services) we have not reported on the data in this report.

Changes in questions for daycare of children services

For daycare of children services, we added a question that asks: 'Are you a nursery that is part of a primary school establishment?'. Based on the responses to this, we have presented some basic comparisons of quality grading in primary school nurseries to other nursery services in chapter 4.

We removed the option 'Forest' from the question on the philosophies that the service is operated under, and replaced it with the option 'Exclusively outdoor based' (with a help text explaining how this is defined). This was done to more clearly capture the services that were provided predominantly outdoors.

Appendix 5: How the Care Inspectorate assesses quality themes during inspection

During inspections, we assess 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 quality 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 theme is evaluated using a six-point scale.

- 6 – Excellent
- 5 – Very good
- 4 – Good
- 3 – Adequate
- 2 – Weak
- 1 – Unsatisfactory

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