



Early learning and childcare statistics 2019

The provision and use of registered daycare of
children and childminding services in
Scotland as at 31 December 2019

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HAPPY TO TRANSLATE

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Executive summary

This report and the following points relate to the provision of daycare of children and childminding services in Scotland on 31 December 2019.

General key points

- Compared to 2018, there are slightly fewer early learning and childcare (ELC) services operating, but the number of places available has increased again.
- In preparation for the expansion of funded hours for 3- and 4- year-olds (and eligible 2-year-olds) to 1,140 hours originally planned for August 2020 (delayed due to the impact of Covid-19), there has been a 3.8% increase in the number of places available in nursery services, amounting to over 4,500 additional places compared to 2018.
- The number of children registered in total has decreased slightly compared to 2018.
- The proportion of services that provide funded places for 3- and 4-year-olds (and eligible 2-year-olds) has continued to increase in 2019.
- Over half (61.5%) of local authority run nurseries offered whole day places (or a choice of a whole or a part day place) in 2019. This rate has increased year on year.

Children registered with early learning and childcare services

- The number of children registered with early learning and childcare services decreased compared to 2018. On 31 December 2019, there were 250,560 children registered – a decrease of 0.7% from 252,220 children registered in 2018.
- There were however increases in the number of children registered with nurseries and holiday playschemes.

Number of registered services and service capacity

- The overall capacity in early learning and childcare services increased by 1.0%, from 200,110 in 2018 to 202,100 registered places available on 31 December 2019.
- Total capacity available in childminding services declined while capacity in nurseries and holiday playschemes has grown, with increases across the private, voluntary or not for profit and public sectors.
- There were 3,643 daycare of children services, a small decrease over the year (three fewer services compared to 2018). However, the average size of daycare of children services has continued to increase every year. The average size of service in 2019 was 47.4 places, compared to 46.2 in 2018 and 44.9 in 2017.
- The number of childminders registered decreased by 7.0% compared to 2018. This was partly due to fewer new services registering, with only 302 new childminders registering in 2019 compared to 396 new registrations in 2018.

Funded places and service availability

- The proportion of services reporting that they provided funded early learning and childcare has increased in 2019. On 31 December 2019, 96.1% of nurseries, 86.3% of children and family centres and 75.6% of playgroups provided funded places.
- More daycare of children services now offer whole-day sessions; 70.3% offered this option. This rate has been continuing to increase year on year and 78.3% of nursery services now offer whole day sessions.
- The majority of local authority nurseries (69.0%) now offer whole day sessions, or a choice of whole or part day sessions, a notable increase of 16.9 percentage points compared to 2018.
- The proportion of services offering a service in the morning before school hours has increased from 71.6% in 2018 to 73.1% in 2019. The rate of services that can provide care after school hours is similar to last year at 82.3% (compared to 82.4% in 2018).

Quality of services

- The quality of services remained high overall with 91.7% of childminders and 87.7% of daycare of children services found to be Good or Better for all quality themes. This represents a slight decrease compared to 2018 when 91.9% of childminders and 88.0% of daycare of children services were achieving this standard. The proportion of services with all themes found to be Weak or Unsatisfactory remained very low.
- Overall, 90.2% of services offering funded ELC places were evaluated as Good or better in all quality themes.

Geographical variance in service provision

Urban and rural areas

- The areas with the highest rate of funded ELC services evaluated as Good or better in all themes were accessible small towns and accessible rural areas, while the areas with the lowest proportion of high-quality funded services were remote small towns and remote rural areas.
- The highest number (and rate per school-aged population) of out of school care and holiday playscheme services are based in the largest urban areas.
- Smaller accessible areas have higher rates (per school-aged population) of out of school care services compared to rural areas and smaller urban areas (albeit lower than the largest urban areas).

Levels of deprivation

- There were a greater number of out of school care services operating in the 20% least deprived areas compared to the 20% most deprived areas. In the 20% most deprived areas, over half of services were run by voluntary or not for profit organisations, while in the 20% least deprived areas the private sector was the largest provider of out of school care.

- In terms of number of services and rate per school-aged population, the volume of holiday playschemes is roughly equal in the most deprived areas and the least deprived areas. Over half of all holiday playschemes are run by voluntary/not for profit organisations. However, this varies as deprivation level decrease, with a greater prevalence of privately operated services in the least deprived areas.
- There is little variation in the levels of quality services (those evaluated as Good or better in all themes) across different levels of deprivation, showing that a consistent level of good-quality funded provision is available in all deprivation areas.
- There was however a higher proportion of local authority run services offering funded places found to be Good or better in all quality themes compared to funded services run by other sectors.

Supporting data tables

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 2018 – 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 services.¹ 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 information listed below.

- The number of daycare of children services and childminders registered with the Care Inspectorate on 31 December 2019, 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 on 31 December 2019. 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,

¹ 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.

measured by number of available registered places.

- Information on the quality of early learning and childcare services through analysis of grading data on 31 December 2019.
- Information on complaints in early learning and childcare services that were investigated by the Care Inspectorate between 1 January and 31 December 2019.
- Information on the number of services providing funded places under the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 on 31 December 2019.

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.

Service categories

Here is a summary of the main service categories featured in this report 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

Crèches provide 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

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

Nursery

Nurseries provide 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

This service 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. This service 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 a small number of services run by health boards.

Private providers

These are 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 2021 (although some local authorities have implemented this increase during 2020, meaning that some children will receive increased funded hours before 2021). The Scottish Government has published [A Blueprint for 2020: The Expansion of Early Learning and Childcare in Scotland](#) which sets out the policy vision and framework for delivering the expansion of the early learning and childcare entitlement that is of a high quality, flexible, affordable and accessible provision for families. The new service model will be 'provider neutral'. It offers parents and carers a greater choice of settings from which to access their funded entitlement and through the introduction of a new national standard, provides assurance that, regardless of whether the funded hours are provided by a service in the public, private or voluntary sectors, or through provision offered by childminders, that all settings providing the funded entitlement will have met the national standard.

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 settings in Scotland

Overall, there were 250,560 children registered with an early learning and childcare setting on 31 December 2019. This is lower than the 252,220 children registered in December 2018 but an increase compared to the 249,110 children registered in December 2014.

Of the total registered, 219,000 children (87.4% of the total) were registered with daycare of children services and 31,560 (12.6%) were registered with childminding services. These totals are summarised by type of care provision over time in Table 1 below and in more detail in supporting Table 1a.

Table 1: Number of children registered with early learning and childcare services by main type of service on 31 December 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019.

Care service main type	December 2014	December 2015	December 2016	December 2017	December 2018	December 2019
Childminding	34,680	32,660	33,440	33,660	32,700	31,560
Children and Family Centre	10,100	11,440	12,020	11,860	11,050	10,430
Holiday Playscheme	4,460	3,960	4,040	3,860	4,240	4,690
Nursery	142,790	143,000	145,440	145,810	145,530	145,970
Out of School	46,080	47,890	50,830	52,500	53,600	53,260
Playgroup	8,000	6,780	6,430	5,600	5,100	4,650
Other services*	3,000	3,670	0	0	0	0
All care service types	249,110	249,400	252,200	253,280	252,220	250,560

* Note: from 2016 onwards, the option for 'other services' and 'no single service type' was removed. All services are now classified within one of the set categories. All figures in the table are rounded to the nearest 10, therefore totals may not equal the sum of their parts.

- Overall, the number of children registered has fallen by 0.7% compared to 2018.

The change in the number of children registered varies by type of service, with some types of care showing growth while others are in decline. Table 2 below shows how the number of children registered has changed comparing to 2018 and 2014.

Table 2: Change in numbers of children registered comparing 2019 to 2018 and 2014

Care service main type	Change in number of children reg'd compared to 2018	% change compared to 2018	Change in number of children reg'd compared to 2014	% change compared to 2014
Childminding	-1,140	-3.5%	-3,120	-9.0%
Children and Family Centre	-620	-5.6%	+330	+3.3%
Holiday Playscheme	+450	+10.6%	+230	+5.2%
Nursery	+440	+0.3%	+3,180	+2.2%
Out of School	-340	-0.6%	+7,180	+15.6%
Playgroup	-450	-8.8%	-3,350	-41.9%
All care service types	-1,660	-0.7%	+1,450	+0.6%

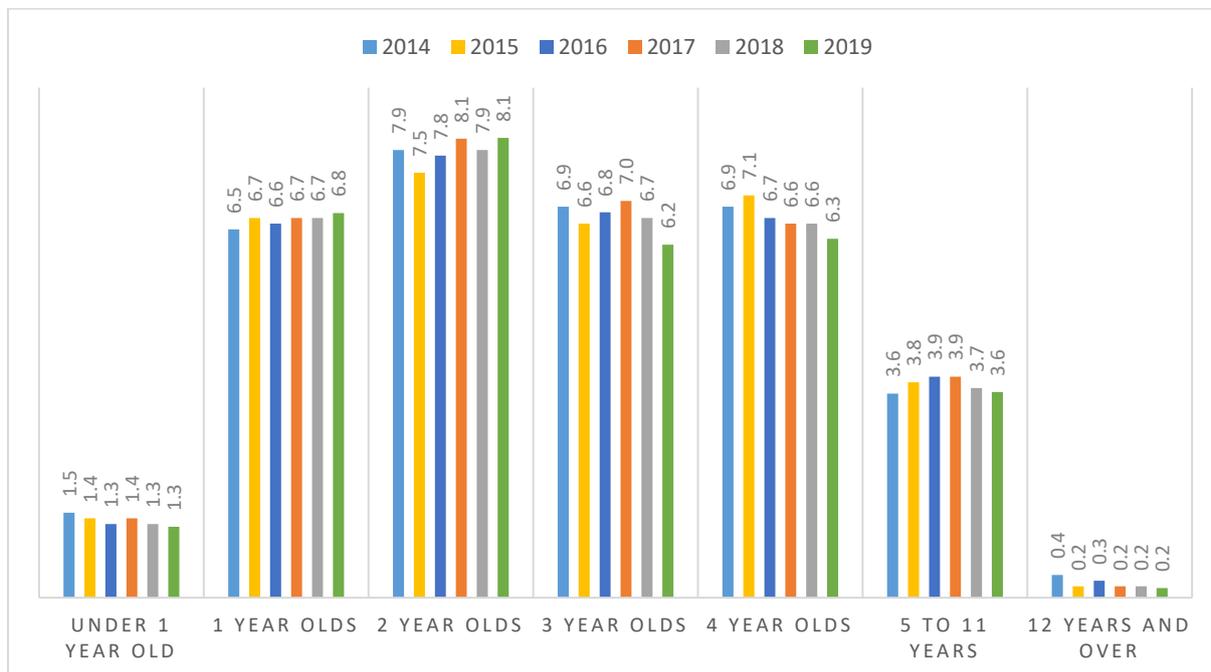
Number of children registered with childminding services

Although there was an overall 3.5% decline in the number of children registered, there were increases and decreases in specific age groups. In terms of the number of children registered per 100 population:

- the rate of children aged 1 and 2 registered with childminders increased,
- there were decreases in the rate of 3-year-olds, 4-year-olds and those in the 5 to 11 age group registered with childminders.

The variation in the rate of children registered (per 100 population) with childminding services between 2014 and 2019 is illustrated in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Rate per 100 population children registered in childminding services



As the decline in the number of childminding services operating is greater than the decline in the children registered with services, this suggests that the number of children registered per service has increased again in 2019. The average number of children registered per childminding service on 31 December 2019 was 6.6 children per service. This is an increase compared to the rate of 6.4 children per service at the same point in 2018 (which was also an increase compared to the 6.2 children per service in 2017).

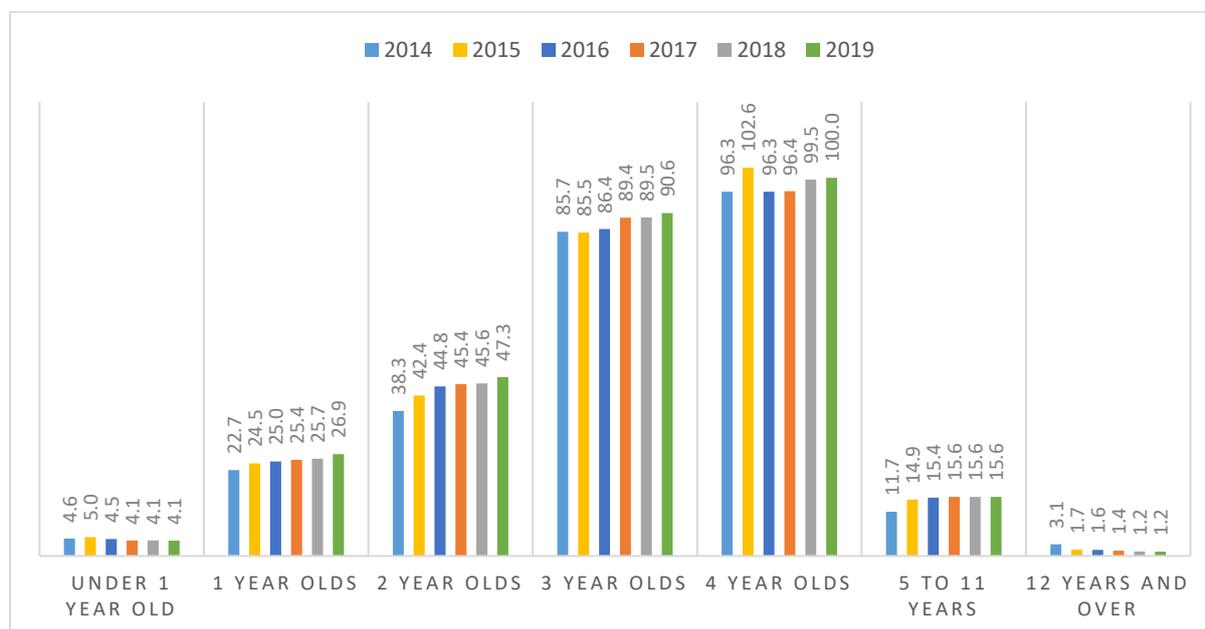
Number of children registered with daycare of children services

Although there was a small decrease in the number of children registered with daycare of children services (219,000 children registered in 2019 compared to 219,560 in 2018, a decline of 0.2%), in terms of the rate per 100 population there were increases in most age groups.

- The rate per 100 population of children aged 1, 2, 3 and 4 registered with daycare of children services increased.
- The rate per 100 population remained the same in children aged under 1 year and in children aged 5 and over.

The variation in the rate of children registered (per 100 population) with daycare of children services between 2014 and 2019 is illustrated in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2: Rate per 100 population children registered in daycare of children services



Daycare of children covers a wide range of types of care provision, where the prevalence of each type of care setting varies across Scotland and all sectors. Table 3 below illustrates the percentage of children registered in each type of care setting by sector.

Table 3: Percentage of children registered in daycare of children services (excluding crèches) by provider sector on 31 December 2019

Main type of daycare provision	Number of children registered	Sector		
		Public	Private	Voluntary or Not for Profit
Children and Family Centre	10,430	77.8%	0.1%	22.2%
Holiday Playscheme	4,690	9.2%	27.6%	63.2%
Nursery	145,970	52.2%	41.1%	6.8%
Out of School	53,260	9.5%	40.1%	50.4%
Playgroup	4,650	1.9%	9.0%	89.0%
All daycare of children services	219,000	41.0%	37.9%	21.1%

- Local authorities remain the largest provider of nurseries and children and family centres (in terms of children registered).
- The voluntary/not for profit sector continues to provide the majority of out of school care, holiday playschemes and playgroups (in terms of number of children registered).

Supporting Tables 1b and 1c have a full illustration of the number of children registered with nurseries and out of school care services by sector and age groups.

Children aged under 1 year registered with services

Where very young children are registered with care services, these tend to be with childminders, nurseries and children and family centres. Children registered with care services aged under 6 months are relatively rare, with only a small number of services caring for children so young. In comparison, services with children aged 6 months to 1 year registered are far more common. Table 4 below shows the percentage of services that have any children aged under 1 year registered.

Table 4: Percentage of services with very young children registered

Main type of daycare provision	% of services with children aged up to 3 months	% of services with children aged between 3 to 6 months	% of services with children aged between 6 months to under 1 year
Childminding	0.6%	1.8%	13.5%
Children and Family Centre	3.8%	6.9%	42.0%
Nursery	0.5%	3.6%	27.4%

- Overall, across all early learning and childcare service types (excluding crèches), 5.3 per 100 population aged under 1 year were registered with a care service (compared to 5.5 per 100 in 2018)
- Of all children registered with early learning and childcare services (excluding crèches) 1.0% were aged 6 to 12 months, 0.1% were aged 3 to 6 months and only 0.01% were aged under 3 months (compared to 1.2%, 0.1% and 0.02% respectively in 2018).

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

On 31 December 2019 there were 8,395 early learning and childcare services in Scotland with a total combined capacity of 202,100 places.

Of this total, 3,643 were daycare of children services providing a total of 172,620 places. Compared to 2018, the number of daycare services has fallen by three services, however the available capacity has increased by 4,160 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).

The large increase in the number of places comes mainly from a large increase in nursery places, particularly in nurseries operated by local authorities. The capacity in nurseries overall has increased by 4,530 compared to 2018 (a 3.8% increase), with 3,790 of these places coming from local authority nursery services. Compared to 2014, the number of places available in nursery services has increased by 14.1%, from 108,440 to 123,780 places. The number of places available in local authority nursery services has increased since 2014 by 10,330 places. This reflects the ongoing preparation towards the upcoming expansion of statutory funded hours for 3- and 4-year-olds (and eligible 2-year-olds).

The number of childminding services has continued to decrease in 2019. There were 4,752 childminders operating at 31 December 2019, providing a total of 29,478 places. There has been a 7.0% decrease in the number of childminding services and a 6.9% decrease in the number of places available in childminding services compared to 2018. Comparing with 2014, there were 1,350 fewer services operating, which is a 22.1% decrease in the number of services resulting in 21.5% drop in the number of places available.

The number of new childminding services registered in the year has also continued to decline, impacting upon the overall number of services operating. In 2019, 302 new childminding services registered compared to 396 in 2018 (and 477 in 2017).

The proportion of childminders who cancel their registration within the first 12 months has decreased compared to 2018. 9.1% of childminders that registered in 2018 cancelled within their first 12 months of operation (most cancelling during 2019), lower than the 13.2% reported in 2018 (relating to new registrations from 2017, cancelling within 12 months of registering).

Overall, there has been a net increase in capacity across the whole early learning and childcare sector (childminders and daycare of children) compared to 2018. On 31 December 2019, there were 1,990 more places available (a 1% increase) compared to 2018. Compared to 2014, there were 6,800 more places available, which is a 3.5% increase.

Table 5 below illustrates the numbers of services operating and number of places available in daycare of children and childminding services over time.

Table 5: Number of services and total capacity, 2014-2019 (all services, daycare of children and childminding services)

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
All early learning and childcare services						
Number of services	9,859	9,726	9,402	9,127	8,754	8,395
Total capacity	195,300	196,400	200,190	199,870	200,110	202,100
Childminders						
Number of services	6,102	5,954	5,669	5,426	5,108	4,752
Total capacity	37,540	36,700	35,180	33,610	31,650	29,480
Daycare of children services						
Number of services	3,757	3,722	3,733	3,701	3,646	3,643
Total capacity	157,760	162,700	165,010	166,260	168,460	172,620

Most childminders are registered for a maximum of six children, which is the most they can care for at any one time on their own, including the childminders own children. Some childminders choose to employ assistants to have a greater maximum number of places. The average number of places in childminding services has remained consistent with previous years at 6.2 places per service.

The average number of places in daycare of children services has continued to increase year on year and has risen again in 2019 from 46.2 to 47.4 (see table 6 below). This increase is accounted for mainly in the large increase in the number of places in nursery services.

Table 6: Average number of places per service available in childminding and daycare of childcare services on 31 December 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019.

Average number of places	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Childminding	6.2	6.2	6.2	6.2	6.2	6.2
Daycare of Children	42	43.7	44.2	44.9	46.2	47.4

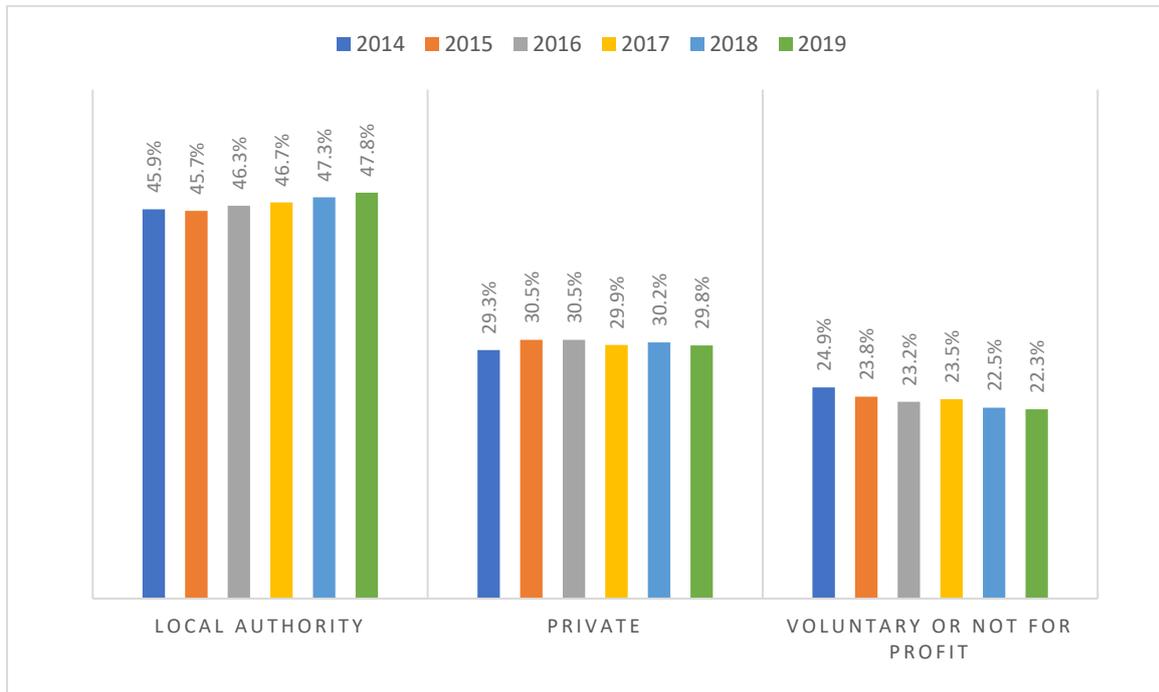
Services by provider sector

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

For daycare of children services, 47.8% were provided by local authorities (which includes 3 nursery services run by health boards). 29.8% were privately operated services while 22.3% were voluntary or not for profit services.

Figure 3 below illustrates the proportion of services operated by each sector over time.

Figure 3: Percentage of registered daycare of children services by provider sector on 31 December 2014-2019



Numbers of services and capacities by service categories

Daycare of children services cover a wide range of different areas of care provision, the largest of which is nurseries followed by out of school care and playgroups. It is also possible that a service may offer a number of different types of care. For example, a nursery may also provide out of school care in the form of a breakfast club, or a children and family centre may also offer a holiday playscheme. In this report we have categorised services according to what they reported to be their main area of care provision.

A summary of the number of services operating between 2014 and 2019 by service type is presented in Table 7 below.

Table 7: Number of registered services by main service type on 31 December 2014-2019

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	% change 2018 to 2019	% change 2014 to 2019
Childminding	6,102	5,954	5,669	5,426	5,105	4,752	-6.9%	-22.1%
Children and family centre	139	149	161	151	136	131	-3.7%	-5.8%
Creche	83	78	73	75	63	56	-11.1%	-32.5%
Holiday playscheme	50	48	44	43	39	45	15.4%	-10.0%
Nursery	2,443	2,449	2,468	2,475	2,467	2,493	1.1%	2.0%
Out of school care	703	726	739	738	748	738	-1.3%	5.0%
Playgroup	291	272	248	219	193	180	-6.7%	-38.1%
No single service type*	48	50	0	0	0	0	n/a	n/a
Total	9,859	9,726	9,402	9,127	8,754	8,395	-4.1%	-14.8%
Total (not inc. Childminding)	3,757	3,772	3,733	3,701	3,646	3,643	-0.1%	-3.0%

* From 2016 onwards, services are classified within one of the set categories. The option for 'other services' or 'no single service type' has been removed.

Table 8 below, and supporting Table 22, compare in detail the total capacity and average number of places in 2014, 2018 and 2019.

Table 8: Total capacity and average number of places comparing 31 December 2014, 2018 and 2019

	2014		2018		2019	
	Total Capacity (reg'd places)	Average capacity per service	Total Capacity (reg'd places)	Average capacity per service	Total Capacity (reg'd places)	Average capacity per service
Childminders	37,540	6.2	31,650	6.2	29,480	6.2
Children and family centre	7,380	53.1	8,190	60.2	8,100	61.8
Creche	3,100	37.3	1,790	28.4	1,710	30.5
Holiday playscheme	2,030	40.6	1,360	34.9	1,540	34.2
Nursery	108,440	44.4	119,250	48.3	123,780	49.7
Out of school care	28,510	40.6	33,440	44.7	33,340	45.2
Playgroup	6,800	23.4	4,430	22.9	4,160	23.1
Total	195,310	-	200,110	-	202,100	-
Total (not inc. Childminding)	157,760	42.0	168,460	46.2	172,620	47.4

3. Early learning and childcare funding in Scotland

The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 has significantly expanded funded entitlement for early learning and childcare. The statutory funded entitlement on 31 December 2019 for all children aged 3 and 4 years (and eligible 2-year-olds) was 600 hours.

During 2019, many nursery services increased their maximum number of registered places in anticipation of the further increase to 1,140 hours for children aged 3 and 4 years (and eligible 2-year-olds). In addition, more existing services began offering funded places in partnership with the local authority.

The majority of funded places are offered by nurseries. In addition, some local authorities offer funded places through other services like playgroups or childminders.

The proportion of services offering funded places has increased in nurseries and children and family centres compared to 2018. The proportion of services providing funded places between 2014 and 2019 is presented in Table 9 below and in more detail in supporting Table 27c.

Table 9: Proportion of services providing funded early learning and childcare on 31 December 2014-2019

Care Service type	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Nurseries	92.0%	92.6%	93.9%	94.1%	94.5%	96.1%
Children and family centres	76.0%	84.0%	72.0%	75.5%	84.6%	86.3%
Playgroups	69.0%	72.0%	75.4%	74.9%	75.7%	75.6%

- Most services (63.5%) offering funded places provide these for children aged 3 years and older only. A further 34.4% of services offer funded places for 2-year-olds in addition to children aged 3 or older.
- Only 2.2% of services offering funded places do so exclusively for 2-year-olds.
- 37.8% of daycare of children services that are registered to include children aged under 3 in their care provision only offer funded places to children aged over 3.
- The majority of local authority nurseries (73.2%) that offer funded places do so exclusively for children aged 3 and 4 years. Most private and voluntary or not for profit nurseries that provide funded places are also focused on provision of places for children aged 3 and 4 years.
- 32.5% of nurseries offer funded places for 2-year-olds (including those offering places for 2-year-olds and 3- and 4-year-olds).

See Table 10 and Table 11 below for a further breakdown by age groups, service type and nurseries by sector.

Table 10: Proportion of all services offering funded places by age groups

Care 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	10.6%	85.0%	4.4%
Nursery	1.0%	31.5%	67.5%
Playgroup	12.5%	44.1%	43.4%
All services offering funded places	2.0%	34.4%	63.5%

Table 11: Nursery services offering funded places by age groups and sector

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	0.7%	26.2%	73.2%
Private	1.3%	40.7%	58.0%
Voluntary or Not for Profit	3.2%	41.2%	55.6%
All nurseries offering funded places	1.0%	31.5%	67.5%

Quality theme evaluations in services offering funded places

We have continued to see a higher proportion of services that provide funded places evaluated as high quality compared to services that do not provide funded places in 2019.

In 90.2% of services offering funded places, the quality was found to be Good or better in all quality themes compared to 80.3% of services delivering the same type of provision (in other words nursery, playgroup etc) but not offering funded places.

In nursery services in particular, where 89.1% of services overall were evaluated as Good or better in all themes, there is a clear distinction between services that offer funded places and those that do not. Table 12 below shows the comparison by sector between nurseries offering funded places and those that do not.

Table 12: Quality evaluations in nursery services by sector and ELC funded places

Nursery offers funded places?	Sector	% of services found to be Good or better in all quality themes
Yes	Local authority	93.0%
	Private	84.3%
	Voluntary/not for profit	90.6%
No	Local authority	n/a*
	Private	47.1%
	Voluntary/not for profit	70.0%
All Nurseries		89.1%

* note: all local authority nurseries provide funded places

There is a similar pattern with playgroups and children and family centres. Services providing funded places were found to be a higher quality than those not offering funded places.

This confirms the fact that high quality care is one of the key criteria for becoming a funded provider.

Supporting Table 34i and Table 34j show the breakdown of quality theme evaluations by sector and service type.

Quality theme evaluations between 2014 and 2019

- Since 2014 more than nine out of 10 funded services were found to be good or better in all quality theme evaluations.

The proportion of services evaluated as Very Good or Excellent in all quality themes has declined since 2014, however at 38.1% this rate remains greater than the 12.6% of daycare of children services delivering the same type of provision (in other words nursery, playgroup etc) but not offering funded places that achieve this high standard.

Table 13 below shows the percentage of services found to be Good or better in all themes and those evaluated as Very Good or Excellent in all themes in each year since 2014.

Table 13: Proportion of services offering funded places found to be Good or better and those evaluated as Very Good or Excellent in quality theme evaluations between 2014 and 2019

	Year					
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
% of services found to be Good or better in all quality themes	93.2%	91.9%	91.4%	91.0%	90.6%	90.2%
% of services found to be very good or excellent in all quality themes	49.1%	48.1%	45.8%	42.7%	40.5%	38.1%

Quality theme evaluations by Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) and Urban Rural Classification

There is little variation in the quality of services across different levels of deprivation, showing that a consistent level of good quality funded provision is available in all areas.

Regardless of deprivation level, we see a higher proportion of public sector services offering funded places found to be Good or better in all quality themes compared to funded services run by other sectors.

Table 14 and Table 15 below show the proportion of funded services evaluated as Good or better in all themes by SIMD quintile.

Table 14: Quality of funded services by SIMD quintile

SIMD(2020) Quintile	% of services found to be Good or better in all quality themes
1 (20% most deprived areas)	90.7%
2	89.0%
3	90.2%
4	91.0%
5 (20% least deprived areas)	90.2%
All services offering funded places	90.2%

Table 15: Quality of funded services by SIMD quintile and sector

SIMD(2020) Quintile	Sector	% of services found to be Good or better in all quality themes
1	Local Authority	94.1%
	Private	81.5%
	Voluntary or Not for Profit	85.5%
2	Local Authority	91.1%
	Private	81.6%
	Voluntary or Not for Profit	90.2%
3	Local Authority	92.8%
	Private	85.0%
	Voluntary or Not for Profit	85.1%
4	Local Authority	94.6%
	Private	85.4%
	Voluntary or Not for Profit	88.8%
5	Local Authority	93.1%
	Private	86.5%
	Voluntary or Not for Profit	91.7%
All services offering funded places		90.2%

In terms of the prevalence of high-quality services by urban rural classification, there is more variation than when considering where services are located based on deprivation levels.

The areas with the highest rate of funded services found to be Good or better in all themes were accessible small towns and accessible rural areas, while the areas with the lowest proportion of high-quality funded services were remote small towns and remote rural areas.

In terms of sector, local authority services offering funded places were generally the best performing with the highest rate of services found to be good or better in all themes. However, there were two exceptions, in large urban areas and remote small towns, funded services run by voluntary or not for profit providers had the highest rate of high performing services.

Table 16 and Table 17 below show the proportion of funded services evaluated as Good or better in all themes by urban rural classification.

Table 16: Quality of funded services by urban rural classification

Urban Rural category	% of services found to be Good or better in all quality themes
Large Urban Areas	88.7%
Other Urban Areas	91.3%
Accessible Small Towns	92.4%
Remote Small Towns	85.9%
Accessible Rural	91.9%
Remote Rural	88.3%
All services offering funded places	90.2%

Table 17: Quality of funded services by urban rural category and sector

Urban Rural category	Sector	% of services found to be Good or better in all quality themes
Large Urban Areas	Local Authority	92.5%
	Private	81.9%
	Voluntary or Not for Profit	93.1%
Other Urban Areas	Local Authority	94.4%
	Private	87.2%
	Voluntary or Not for Profit	83.7%
Accessible Small Towns	Local Authority	95.4%
	Private	89.3%
	Voluntary or Not for Profit	87.2%
Remote Small Towns	Local Authority	89.1%
	Private	73.1%
	Voluntary or Not for Profit	94.4%
Accessible Rural	Local Authority	93.6%
	Private	88.9%
	Voluntary or Not for Profit	87.7%
Remote Rural	Local Authority	90.2%
	Private	68.4%
	Voluntary or Not for Profit	85.7%
All services offering funded places		90.2%

4. Out of school care provision

Out of school care is broadly defined to be care provided to school-aged children outside of the usual school hours, and includes after-school clubs, clubs or playschemes run during school holidays and breakfast clubs.

Families use out of school care for a number of reasons. Out of school care extends the school day to align with a typical working day and during school holiday periods provides full-time childcare. Many families also choose to use out of school care because of the experiences that it provides for their child, particularly opportunities to play, socialise and take part in a range of extra-curricular activities as part of a group.

In August 2019, the Scottish Government issued a draft framework for consultation on out of school care.² The draft framework set out the government's vision for out of school care and raised questions about the benefits and challenges of accessing this type of care.

The framework identifies three key aims for focusing future policy development.

1. High quality services which provide children with life-enhancing experiences.
2. Out of school care is accessible and affordable and meets the needs of children and young people, parents and carers and communities.
3. Out of school care services are embedded in communities and enable children and young people to access a range of spaces including the outdoors.

Within this report, the availability and accessibility of out of school care on 31 December 2019 will be presented along with a summary of the quality evaluations from our inspections.

Availability and accessibility of out of school care

On 31 December 2019 there were 738 out of school care services operating in Scotland, of which 377 (51.1%) also offer a breakfast club and 341 (46.2%) also provide a holiday playscheme. There were a further 45 services registered that solely operate a holiday playscheme service.

Some other types of daycare services (such as nurseries) also offer a breakfast club or holiday playscheme in addition to their main area of provision. However, this additional provision is typically in place to offer wraparound care or meals to children already using that service, and those children are not normally attending school. The analysis in this section of the report will focus on out of school care services and holiday playscheme services.

In the Scottish Government's draft framework, it was stated that families in the least deprived areas of Scotland were more likely to report using after-school clubs and holiday clubs than families in the most deprived areas. In addition, families in the most deprived areas were more likely to use breakfast clubs than those living in the least deprived areas.³

² <https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/consultation-paper/2019/08/out-school-care-scotland-draft-framework-2019/documents/out-school-care-scotland-draft-framework-2019/out-school-care-scotland-draft-framework-2019/govscot%3Adocument/out-school-care-scotland-draft-framework-2019.pdf>

³ See pages 69 and 70 of Out of school care in Scotland draft framework 2019

In terms of the services operating on 31 December 2019, a higher volume of out of school care services were situated in the 20% least deprived areas of Scotland compared to the 20% most deprived areas (23.0% of all services operating compared to 17.9%). In terms of the volume of services as a rate based on population, there were 1.16 services per 1000 population aged 4-15 in the 20% least deprived areas compared to 0.87 per 1000 population aged 4-15 in the 20% most deprived areas. In addition to having more services and a higher rate per population, services in the 20% least deprived areas were also typically larger in terms of number of places than those in the most deprived areas (average number of places per service in the 20% least deprived areas was 54.2 compared to 43.1 in the 20% most deprived areas). In the 20% most deprived areas, over half (54.5%) of services were run by voluntary or not for profit organisations, while in the 20% least deprived areas the private sector was the largest provider of out of school care (47.1% of services).

This suggests a greater availability and choice of services and places in less deprived areas compared to areas of higher deprivation, with a greater reliance on voluntary/not for profit organisations in the 20% most deprived areas of Scotland.

Focusing on those services offering a breakfast club as part of their care provision, previously noted as being more likely to be used by families in the most deprived areas, there is a pattern of greater availability in the least deprived areas.

Only 10.9% of out of school care services that offer a breakfast club are based in the 20% most deprived areas compared to 28.9% being in the 20% least deprived areas. As a rate based on population, this is equal to 0.27 services offering a breakfast club per 1000 population aged 4-15 in the 20% most deprived areas compared to 0.74 services per 1000 population aged 4-15 in the 20% least deprived areas.

Holiday playschemes however are much more evenly spread with 20.5% of services in the 20% most deprived areas, and 20.7% of services in the 20% least deprived areas. In terms of the rate per population, there are 0.52 holiday playscheme services in the 20% most deprived areas compared to 0.54 services in the 20% least deprived areas. Overall, the majority (52.8%) of holiday playschemes are run by voluntary/not for profit organisations. However, this varies as deprivation level decrease, with a greater prevalence of privately operated services in the least deprived areas.

As with most types of daycare service, the majority of out of school care and holiday playschemes are based in urban areas. Table 18 below shows the number of services by their urban rural classification. The highest rate of services per 1000 population (aged 4-15) is in the largest urban areas, but smaller accessible areas also have higher rates of out of school care services in terms of the school-aged population.

Table 18: Out of school care and holiday playschemes by urban rural classification

Urban Rural Classification	Out of school care services	Rate of services per 1000 population aged 4-15	Holiday playscheme services*	Rate of services per 1000 population aged 4-15
Large Urban Areas	324	1.41	173	0.75
Other Urban Areas	229	0.86	134	0.50
Accessible Small Towns	65	1.00	33	0.51
Remote Small Towns	15	0.60	14	0.56
Accessible Rural	89	1.07	27	0.33
Remote Rural	16	0.42	5	0.13
*includes out of school care services that incorporate a holiday playscheme within their care provision				

Quality evaluations of out of school care

Generally, the quality of out of school care services remains very high with 84.3% of all out of school care services (84.8% at 31 December 2019 and over 93.5% of all holiday playschemes (94.6% at 31 December 2019) evaluated to be Good, Very Good or Excellent in all quality themes.

Table 19 below shows the proportion of services with good or better evaluation and those evaluated as very good or excellent in all quality themes.

Table 19: Quality theme evaluations of holiday playschemes and out of school care

Main type of daycare provision	Sector	% of services with all quality themes evaluated as good or better	% of services with all quality themes evaluated as very good or excellent
Holiday Playscheme	Local Authority	100.0%	71.4%
	Private	100.0%	25.0%
	Voluntary/Not for Profit	90.0%	35.0%
All Holiday Playschemes		93.5%	41.9%
Out of School care	Local Authority	89.1%	19.6%
	Private	81.3%	23.4%
	Voluntary/Not for Profit	85.2%	21.8%
All Out of School care services		84.3%	22.1%

5. The quality of early learning and childcare services

The quality of early learning and childcare services continued to be very high overall in 2019.

- In 44.0% of childminders the quality was found to be Very Good or Excellent in all quality themes assessed (slightly lower than the 45.2% reported in 2018).
- The proportion of childminders evaluated as Good, Very Good or Excellent in all quality themes remains very high at 91.7% (slightly lower than the 91.9% reported in 2018).
- In 33.7% of daycare of children services, the quality was found to be Very Good or Excellent in all quality themes assessed (slightly lower than the 35.7% in 2018).
- The rate of daycare of children services where all quality themes were evaluated as Good, Very Good or Excellent remains high, with 87.7% of services achieving this standard (slightly lower than the 88.0% in 2018).
- In particular, nursery services continued to provide a high standard of care, with 37.2% evaluated as Very Good or Excellent in all themes, and 89.1% found to be Good, Very Good or Excellent in all themes assessed (compared to 39.4% and 89.7% in 2018 respectively).
- Services found to be Weak or Unsatisfactory in all themes continue to be rare, with only 0.2% of daycare of children services and 0.1% of childminders at this level.
- Local authority-run services continue to perform well compared to services operated by other sectors in all types of daycare of children service. When considering only services that were evaluated as Very Good or Excellent in all themes, there were some exceptions to this. A higher rate of private and voluntary/not for profit run playgroups, out of school care and creches were achieving this high standard compared to local authority services.
- In terms of the services found to be very good or excellent in all themes, 38.1% of services offering funded ELC places met this standard compared to 21.1% of services not offering funded places.

Table 20 below shows the percentage of services achieving the highest grades, comparing year on year since 2014.

Table 20: Percentage of services found to be good or better in all themes, and those that were very good or excellent in all themes, 2014 to 2019

	Care service type	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
All themes very good or excellent	Childminding	49.6%	48.8%	48.7%	47.6%	45.2%	44.0%
	Daycare of children	42.2%	41.5%	40.3%	37.8%	35.7%	33.7%
All themes good, very good or excellent	Childminding	91.0%	91.8%	91.8%	92.1%	91.9%	91.7%
	Daycare of children	90.3%	88.4%	87.6%	88.3%	88.0%	87.7%

Comparison of evaluations of quality by provider sector

Although most early learning and childcare services continue to operate at a high standard across all sectors, a larger proportion of public sector services were of a high quality (all quality themes evaluated as good or better) compared to other sectors. With the exception of children and family centres, this is the case for all types of daycare of children service.

In terms of the services found to be of the highest standard (those evaluated as very good or excellent in all quality themes), public sector services were generally the strongest performing with the exception of crèches, out of school care and playgroups.

Table 21 and Table 22 below, and supporting Tables 34 (a-k) illustrate the differences in quality evaluations between sectors.

Table 21: Percentage of services evaluated as Good, Very Good or Excellent in all themes, by sector

Daycare type	Public	Private	Voluntary or Not for Profit
Childminding	n/a	91.7%	n/a
Children and Family Centre	92.5%	0.0%	94.1%
Crèche	82.4%	73.3%	66.7%
Holiday Playscheme	100.0%	100.0%	90.0%
Nursery	93.0%	80.8%	89.5%
Out of School Care	89.1%	81.3%	85.2%
Playgroup	100.0%	83.3%	79.6%

Table 22: Percentage of services evaluated as Very Good or Excellent in all themes, by sector

Daycare type	Public	Private	Voluntary or Not for Profit
Childminding	n/a	44.0%	n/a
Children and Family Centre	57.0%	0.0%	44.1%
Crèche	11.8%	20.0%	23.8%
Holiday Playscheme	71.4%	25.0%	35.0%
Nursery	42.6%	25.8%	37.9%
Out of School Care	19.6%	23.4%	21.8%
Playgroup	0.0%	16.7%	19.1%

Services where significant improvement is needed

- Around one in nine nurseries and one in 12 childminders were found to be Adequate or poorer in at least one quality theme.
- In crèches, this rate is increased to over one in four services (26.9%), with most of these evaluated at Adequate or poorer in the quality of management and leadership theme.
- Early learning and childcare services where all quality themes are evaluated as Weak or Unsatisfactory continue to be very rare.

Table 23 and Table 24 below show the number and percentage of services where improvement is needed.

Table 23: Number and percentage of services evaluated as Adequate, Weak or Unsatisfactory in one or more themes by sector, comparing 2019 to 2018

Daycare type	Number of services (2019)	% of services (2019)	Number of services (2018)	% of services (2018)
Childminding	356	8.3%	373	8.1%
Children and Family Centre	9	7.1%	9	6.7%
Crèche	14	26.4%	15	25.4%
Holiday Playscheme	2	6.5%	2	5.4%
Nursery	262	10.9%	247	10.3%
Out of School	106	15.7%	108	15.6%
Playgroup	34	19.9%	40	21.2%

Table 24: Number and percentage of services evaluated as Weak or Unsatisfactory in all themes by sector, comparing 2019 to 2018

Daycare type	Number of services (2019)	% of services (2019)	Number of services (2018)	% of services (2018)
Childminding	3	0.1%	2	0.04%
Children and Family Centre	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Crèche	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Holiday Playscheme	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Nursery	3	0.1%	6	0.2%
Out of School	3	0.4%	5	0.7%
Playgroup	2	1.2%	1	0.5%

6. Complaints in early learning and childcare services

In the year to 31 December 2019, the Care Inspectorate completed investigations into 204 complaints about early learning and childcare services. Most of these were about daycare of children services (60.8%) and the remaining 39.2% were about childminders.

Table 25: Complaint investigations completed during 2019 about early learning and childcare services

Care service type	Complaint investigations completed*	Number of complaints upheld	Upheld complaints 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	80	34	42.5%	33	7.2	1.2
Daycare of children	124	56	45.2%	54	15.4	0.3
Total	204	90	44.1%	87	-	-

We upheld 56 complaints about daycare of children services, which was 45.2% of all investigations completed. This is lower than the 113 upheld complaints (46.7%) seen in the previous year. We upheld 34 complaints about childminders (42.5% of complaints investigated) a decrease compared to the 40 upheld complaints (40.8%) in the year before.

Over half of complaints upheld about daycare of children services were about private nurseries (57.1%) with a further 17.9% of complaints about local authority nursery services and 14.3% about out of school care services.

The rates of complaints upheld in childminders and daycare of children services are relatively low compared to most other care service types that are registered with the Care Inspectorate. For example, in care homes for older people (about which we receive the most complaints) 268.1 complaints were upheld per 1000 services compared to 7.2 complaints per 1000 childminding services and 15.4 per 1000 services in daycare of children services.

Each complaint case investigated can be about a number of different concerns.

- Of the complaints we upheld about childminders, the main reasons for complaints were: exceeding the maximum number of children allowed, children's emotional wellbeing, children's general wellbeing and issues relating to conditions of registration.
- Of the complaints we upheld about daycare of children services, the main reasons for complaints were: children's general wellbeing, communication between staff and children's families, staffing levels and issues around policies and procedures.

For more detailed information on complaints investigated, see supporting Table 38a and Table 38b.

7. Service provision

Provision for different age groups

- Childminders, children and family centres and privately operated nursery services continue to be the main service types that offer places for children under 2 years old.
- Childminding services typically care for the widest range of age groups. Around four in every five childminders (79%) offer a service for children of all ages between 2 and 11 years old and 59% of childminders also offer a service for children aged 12 and over.
- Children and family centres continue to focus their provision on children up to the age of 5, while out of school care and holiday playschemes mainly offered a service for children aged 5 and older.
- Nursery provision varies depending on sector.
 - Most private nurseries (85.1%) offered a service for babies aged under 1, with around a third (31.5%) of voluntary or not for profit nurseries and 4.5% of local authority nurseries offering the same.
 - Local authority and voluntary nurseries mainly provided a service for children aged from 2 to 5 years, with a focus on children aged 3 and 4.

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

Languages and service philosophies

The majority of childminders provided a service only in English. In 0.7% of childminders, the service is delivered using either a mix of English and Gaelic or in Gaelic only (Gaelic only in fewer than five services). 0.9% of services could offer British Sign Language and 2.6% could deliver the service in another language, most commonly Polish, French, Arabic or German 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. 2.1% (76 services) of daycare of children services delivered their service in a combination of English and Gaelic or only in Gaelic (Gaelic only in 26 services) and 5.9% (216 services) could provide the service in another language. The provision of languages other than English has increased compared to 2018 and 2017. Please see supporting Table 29 for further information.

On 31 December 2019, 1.1% of nurseries (27 services) told us that they use the outdoor-based approach to provide 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 0.1% of children and family centres (fewer than five services in each instance) also told us they use an outdoor-based approach. In daycare of children services, 1.9% (68 services) followed a Suzuki/Montessori philosophy and 0.7% (27 services) followed a Steiner philosophy. Both these rates have increased slightly compared to 2018.

Please see supporting Table 29 for further information.

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 2018 and 2017.

Overall, 73.1% of services offered care before school hours. This has increased from 71.6% in 2018.

- Over a third of local authority nurseries (35.4%) provided an early morning service. This is considerably lower than the rate in private nurseries (82.1%) however, the early morning provision in local authority nurseries has seen a 22.7% increase compared to 2018 (an increase of 100 services).
- The rate of childminders offering early morning provision increased to 92.2% this year (from 90.9% in 2018).
- The rate of out of school care services providing an early morning service remained at 50.4%, consistent with 2018.

Overall, 82.3% of services provided care after school hours, similar to the 82.4% seen in 2018.

- Almost all childminders (97.5%) offered their service after school hours.

For further detailed information, please see supporting Tables 30a – 30c.

During school holidays

Local authority run nurseries and playgroups had the lowest proportion of services offered during the holidays, with 16.3% and 6.7% (respectively) providing a service. In contrast, most privately operated nurseries (93.6%) provided a service during the school holidays.

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

Please see supporting Tables 30a-30c for more information.

Whole-day and part-day 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 2019.

- 70.3% of services overall and 78.3% of nurseries offered whole-day sessions or the choice of whole or part-day sessions.

Table 26 below shows the percentage of services offering whole and part-day sessions between 2014 and 2019.

Table 26: Sessions available between 2014 and 2019 in daycare of children services and nurseries**26a – All daycare of children services**

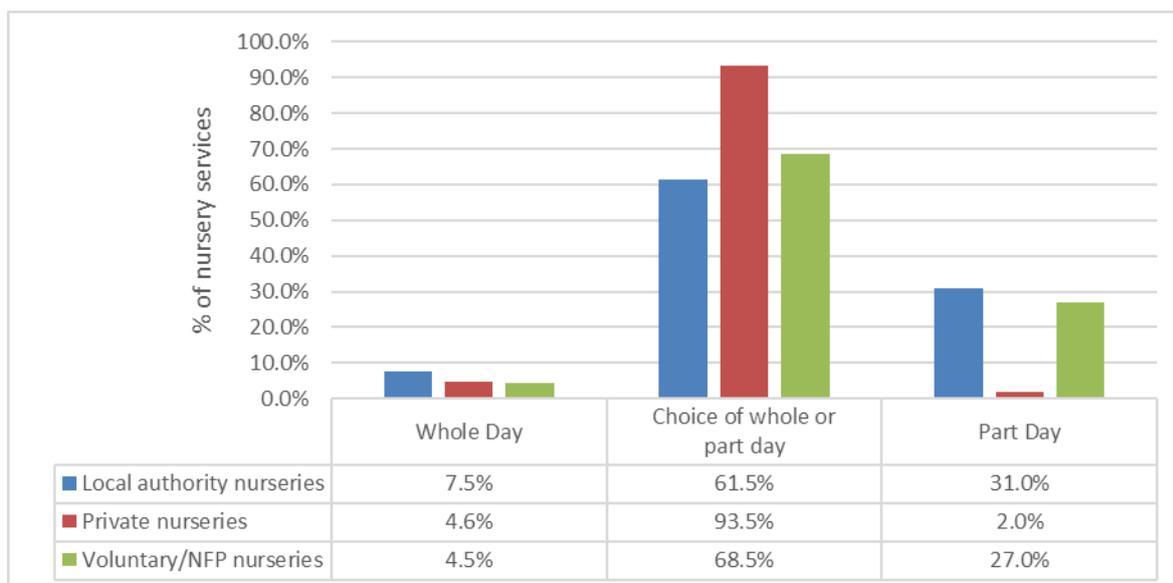
Sessions available	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Whole-day only	3.0%	3.1%	3.2%	3.5%	4.4%	6.2%
Whole-day and part-day sessions offered	45.7%	47.7%	51.4%	54.7%	58.3%	64.1%
Part-day only	50.8%	48.6%	44.5%	40.8%	37.3%	29.7%

26b – All nursery services

Sessions available	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Whole-day only	1.4%	1.6%	1.6%	2.4%	3.7%	6.4%
Whole-day and part-day sessions offered	46.4%	49.5%	54.3%	58.6%	63.8%	71.9%
Part-day only	51.7%	48.9%	43.8%	39.2%	32.5%	21.7%

The sessions offered in nurseries varied widely depending on the sector providing the service.

- Most private nurseries (93.5%) typically offered a choice of part days or full days, with a minority only providing full days or only providing part days.
- The majority (69.0%) of local authority run nurseries now offer full day places only or a choice of full or part days (an increase compared to 52.1% in 2018 and 39.9% in 2017).

Figure 4: Sessions available in nurseries by sector, on 31 December 2019

Some services also offer shorter flexible sessions in addition to the full or part day provision. In 2019, an increased number of nursery services reported that they provide shorter flexible sessions along with full or part day provision.

- 19.0% of all nursery services offered short flexible sessions (compared to 16.5% in 2018)
- 25.7% of private nurseries (24.1% in 2018) and 15.0% of local authority nurseries (12.2% in 2018) offered shorter flexible sessions.

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

Provision of meals and snacks

Most childminders (92.6%) continue to provide meals in their service (similar to the 92.4% in 2018). The meals were provided by the service (18.8%), or by the parents only (50.8%) or by both (22.9%). Almost all childminders (99.3%) provided snacks for the children in the services, at a similar level to 2018 (99.2%).

Around 64% of daycare of children services provided meals in the service (whether by the service alone or by parents or both). This is a continued increase compared to the 55% reported in 2018 and 48% in 2017. The increase in the provision of meals is likely linked to the increase in opening hours and the increase in whole-day sessions offered.

In 61.7% of private nurseries where meals were served, the meals were provided solely by the service. In local authority nurseries, the majority of meals served was split between service only provision (41.3% of those serving meals, increased from 29.0% in 2018) and food provided by both the service and by parents (47.2%).

Most local authority nurseries (70.2%) served meals in the service. This has increased from 53.9% in 2018 (and 39.3% in 2017). Meals were served in 98.3% of private nurseries and 74.0% of voluntary/not for profit nurseries (whether supplied by the service, parents or both).

Almost all daycare of children services (99.6%) provided snacks for the children.

See supporting Table 32a and Table 32b for further detailed information.

Appendix 1: Background and methodology

The Care Inspectorate is the scrutiny body for all 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 on 31 December 2019. 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 2018 are available on the Care Inspectorate website:

<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 for information about the previous calendar year (1 January 2019 to 31 December 2019) and the Care Inspectorate service list (as on 31 December 2019). Figures relating to previous years are taken from our reports on early learning and childcare statistics publications for 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018.

- 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 2019 do not have to submit an annual return for December 2019, we encourage them to do so.

- Of the 8,395 childcare services registered with the Care Inspectorate on 31 December 2019, 7,506 (89%) submitted an annual return, similar to 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 (on 31 December 2019) 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 (on 31 December 2019) to provide estimates for:

- the main service type (such as nursery, playgroup and out of school care)
- the number of children registered with the service on 31 December 2019
- whether daycare of children services provide funded places on 31 December 2019
- the number of children registered with services that use the services for out of school care as of 31 December 2019
- 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 2020 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 SIMD is available here:

<https://www.gov.scot/collections/scottish-index-of-multiple-deprivation-2020/>

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:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-government-urban-rural-classification-2016>

The National Records of Scotland mid-year population estimates (2019) 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-2019>

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 corrected where possible before any analysis has taken place.

Not all childcare services have submitted an annual return. This means that there are some gaps in the data that we need to take account of. The percentage of services that submitted their annual return is summarised in the table below.

Summary of annual return response rates, December 2019

Main service type	Response rate December 2019
Childminders	84%
Children and Family Centre	99%
Creche	82%
Holiday Playscheme	80%
Nursery	97%
Out of School	97%
Playgroup	97%
All services	89%
All services (excl. childminders)	96%

We took the following approached 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 2019, but submitted a return for either 2018 or 2017, the information submitted in the most recent historic annual return was used to impute the missing data for 2019. Where a service re-registered (for example, due to a change in ownership or service provider) and information was missing for 2018, the most recent historic information from the previously registered service was used (if an annual return was submitted in 2017 or 2016). For childminders the information from annual returns from 2016, 2017 and 2018 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 2018 or 2017 (or 2016 for childminders), or where a service was newly registered in 2019 (and not a re-registration) missing data has been estimated. To estimate missing data, we have taken into account the following variables: service size; service location (local authority area and level of deprivation) and service category (nursery, playgroup etc.). We then estimated the missing data using average values from services based on the above criteria.

Appendix 4: Changes to data items collected in 2019

There were no changes in the questions asked in the December 2019 annual return compared to December 2018.

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.

Quality themes

- **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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