



# Early learning and childcare statistics 2020

The provision and use of registered daycare of  
children and childminding services in  
Scotland as at 31 December 2020

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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 at 31 December 2020. The findings within this report will be impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic and the inability for services to operate as they would have normally.

### General key points

- Compared to 2019, there are slightly fewer early learning and childcare (ELC) services operating, but despite this, the number of places available has once again increased.
- The number of children registered in total has decreased compared to 2019. The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has likely driven this decline, with an increase in parents working from home, a large number of people furloughed and service closures among the main reasons for this reduced use of early learning and childcare services during 2020.
- The proportion of services that provide funded places for 3- and 4-year-olds (and eligible 2-year-olds) has continued to increase in 2020.
- Most (84.0%) local authority run nurseries offered whole day places (or a choice of a whole or a part day place) in 2020. This rate has continued to increase 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 2019. 213,140 children were registered at 31 December 2020, a decrease of 14.9% from 250,560 children registered in 2019.
- The largest decline in the number of children registered was reported in out of school care (27.1% decrease) and playgroups (22.2% decrease). This is most likely due to reduced operation of these services during the pandemic, periods of lockdown and furlough and also lack of availability of shared or hired premises.

### Number of registered services and service capacity

- The overall capacity in early learning and childcare services increased by 0.7%, from 202,100 in 2019 to 203,570 registered places available at 31 December 2020.
- Although there was an overall increase in the number of places, there was a decline in the places available in most types of early learning and childcare service with only nurseries reporting an increase in capacity.
- There were 3,588 daycare of children services, a small decrease over the year (55 fewer services compared to 2019). However, the average size of daycare of children services has continued to increase every year. The average size of service in 2020 was 49.1 places, compared to 47.4 in 2019 and 46.2 in 2018.
- The number of childminders registered decreased by 7.5% compared to 2019. In part this was due to fewer new services registering, with only 220 new childminders registering in 2020 compared to 302 new registrations in 2019.

### **Funded places and service availability**

- The proportion of services reporting that they provided funded early learning and childcare has increased in 2020. At 31 December 2020, 97.5% of nurseries, 86.6% of children and family centres and 78.7% of playgroups provided funded places.
- More daycare of children services now offer whole-day sessions; 79.4% offered this option. This rate has been continuing to increase year on year. 89.0% of nursery services now offer whole day sessions.
- The majority of local authority nurseries (84.0%) now offer whole day sessions, or a choice of whole or part day sessions, a notable increase of 22.5 percentage points compared to 2019.

### **Quality of services**

- The quality of services remained high overall with 92.6% of childminders and 88.7% of daycare of children services found to be good or better for all quality themes. This represents a slight increase compared to 2019 when 91.7% of childminders and 87.7% 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, 90.8% of daycare of children services offering funded ELC places were evaluated as good or better in all quality themes. This is a slight increase compared to the 90.2% reported in 2019.

### **Geographical variance in service provision**

#### **Urban – rural areas**

- The areas with the highest rate of funded ELC services evaluated as good or better in all themes were accessible rural areas, accessible small towns and smaller urban areas, while the areas with the lowest proportion of high quality funded services were remote small towns.

#### **Levels of deprivation**

- There is no correlation between prevalence of good quality funded services (those evaluated as good or better in all themes) and levels of deprivation, indicating that a consistent level of good quality funded provision is available in all areas.
- There was however a higher proportion of local authority run services (all offering funded places) found to be good or better in all quality themes compared to funded services run by other sectors, consistent over all deprivation levels.

## 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 2019– 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<sup>1</sup>. 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 2020, 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 2020. 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 on 31 December 2020.
- Information on complaints in early learning and childcare services that were investigated by the Care Inspectorate between 1 January and 31 December 2020.
- Information on the number of services providing funded places under the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 on 31 December 2020.

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

### **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 typically provide daycare facilities for children aged under 5 years. Nurseries are 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 nursery 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 and in-service days. 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 an additional childcare element (for example, breakfast club or holiday playscheme) can also 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. Some offer funded places funded by 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 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 increased to 1140 hours per year in August 2021 (although some local authorities have implemented this increase during 2020, meaning that some children will receive increased funded hours before 2021).

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’.

## **Impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on Early Learning and Childcare services**

The first confirmed cases of Coronavirus (Covid-19) in Scotland emerged at the beginning of March 2020, with the World Health Organisation (WHO) declaring a global pandemic on 11 March 2020. A national lockdown in Scotland was announced on 23 March 2020.

All care services were greatly affected by the pandemic and the required mitigations and measures to prevent the spread of the virus. As was the case with schools, all early learning and childcare services were either closed or had refocused their provision to support only children of key workers and those in most need. Furthermore, the Scottish Government confirmed that the expansion of early learning and childcare provision to 1140 hours a year, due to apply from August 2020, was delayed. It was paused in April 2020 to give local authorities the flexibility to focus on responding to Covid-19.

In March 2020, we recognised the impact of the escalating pandemic on young children, families and communities and as such we applied scrutiny and support systems where they were most needed. We significantly increased our levels of contact with services and providers and continued our monitoring and oversight activities, including using virtual scrutiny approaches that enabled us to work with services to explore and assess their environment and practice. Throughout we have collaborated with Scottish Government and national partners to support them to keep children, families and staff safe and well in the face of the pandemic.

This report relates to the provision of daycare of children and childminding services in Scotland on 31 December 2020. All services were impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic in different ways during 2020. Many services continued their provision albeit with significant adjustments, some were closed for large parts of the year while many others had shorter periods of closure due to covid-19 outbreaks. As such, all of these impacts have had an effect on the statistics contained within this report.

The use of early learning and childcare services reported at 31 December 2020 was reduced compared to previous years. An increase in parents working from home, the large number of people who were not working (at 31 December 2020, an estimated 282,200 employees in Scotland were furloughed<sup>2</sup>) and school closures are thought to be among the main reasons for the decline in demand for early learning and childcare services during 2020.

The impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic during 2020 must be considered when evaluating the statistics in this report in comparison to previous years' data.

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<sup>2</sup> Source: Monthly Economic Brief: February 2021.  
[www.gov.scot/publications/monthly-economic-brief-february-2021/pages/5/](http://www.gov.scot/publications/monthly-economic-brief-february-2021/pages/5/)

## 1. Children registered with early learning and childcare settings in Scotland

Overall, there were 213,140 children registered with an early learning and childcare setting on 31 December 2020. This is lower than the 250,560 children registered in December 2019.

Of the total registered, 187,340 children (87.9% of the total) were registered with daycare of children services and 25,800 (12.1%) were registered with childminding services. These totals are summarised by type of care provision 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 2019 and 2020.**

Care service main type	December 2019	December 2020	Change in number of children registered compared to 2019	% change compared to 2019
Childminding	31,560	25,800	-5,760	-18.3%
Children and Family Centre	10,430	8,480	-1950	-18.7%
Holiday Playscheme	4,690	4,070	-620	-13.2%
Nursery	145,970	132,360	-13610	-9.3%
Out of School Care	53,260	38,810	-14450	-27.1%
Playgroup	4,650	3,620	-1030	-22.2%
<b>All care service types</b>	<b>250,560</b>	<b>213,140</b>	<b>-37,420</b>	<b>-14.9%</b>

- Overall, the number of children registered with early learning and childcare services has fallen by 14.9% compared to 2019.

### Number of children registered with childminding services

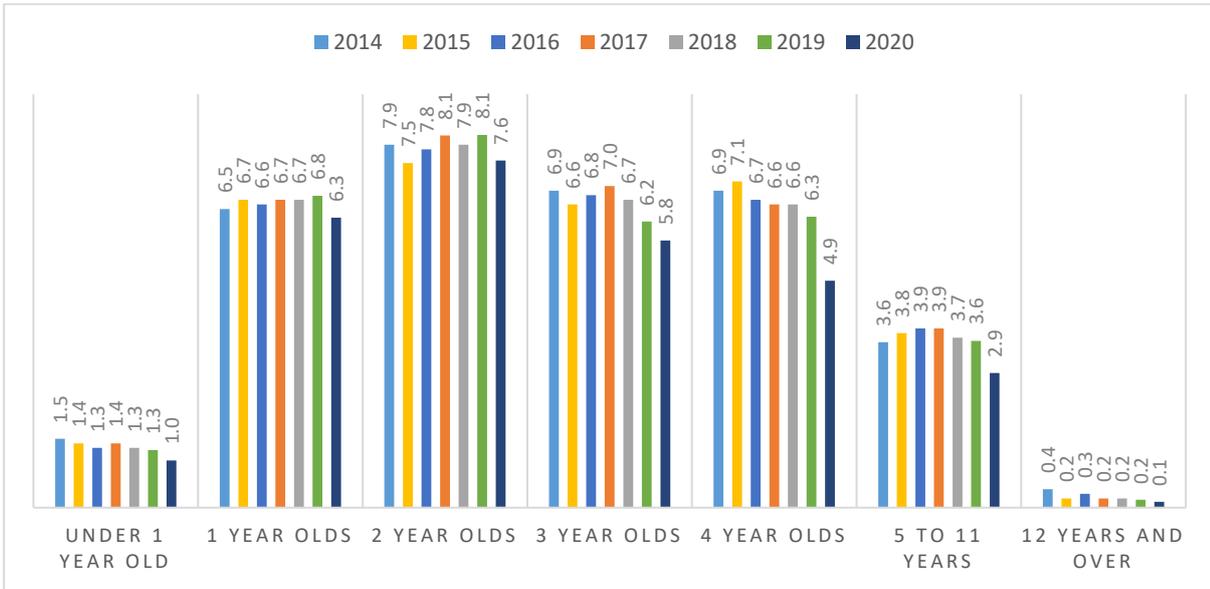
Overall, there was an 18.3% decline in the total number of children registered with childminding services in 2020, however there is variation among the different age groups.

In terms of the rate of children registered with childminding services (per 100 population), the largest decline in children registered during 2020 was in the 4-year-old age group, followed by school aged children in the 5- to 11-year-old category. There were no increases in any of the other age groups.

The average number of children registered per childminding service on 31 December 2020 was 6.0 children per service. This is a decrease compared to the rate of 6.6 children per service at the same point in 2019 and lower also than the rate of 6.4 children per service in 2018.

The variation in the rate of children registered (per 100 population) with childminding services between 2014 and 2020 is illustrated in Figure 1 below.

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

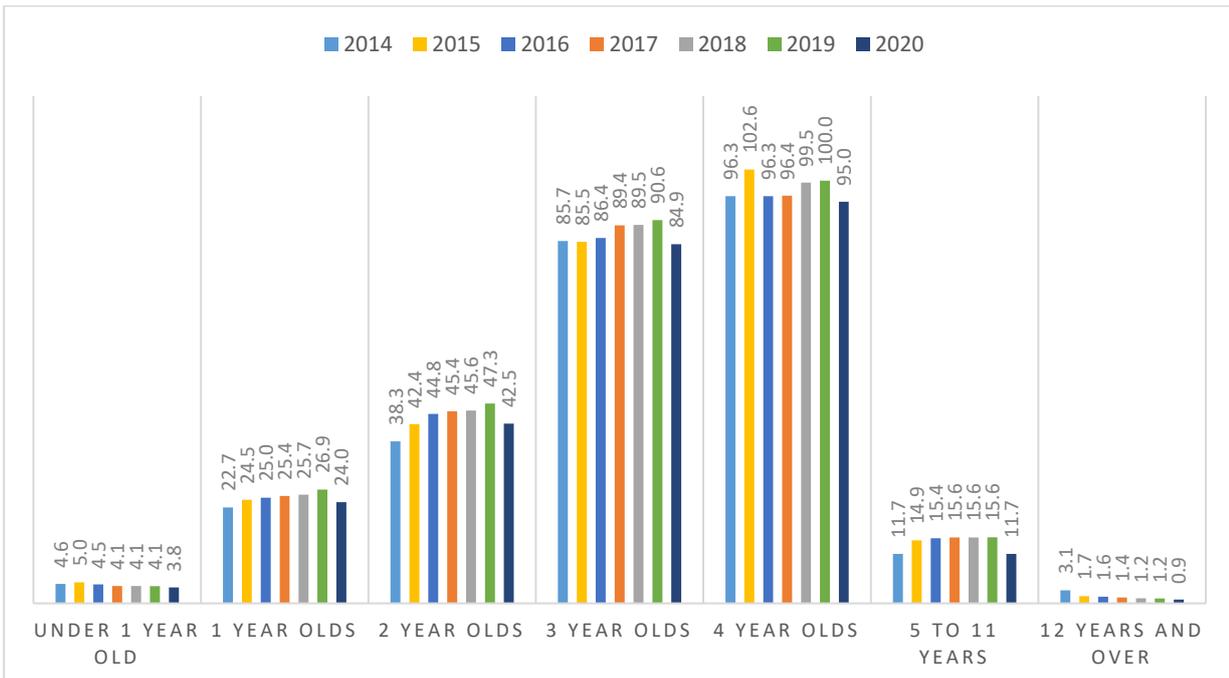


**Number of children registered with daycare of children services**

Overall, there was a decrease in the number of children registered with daycare of children services (213,140 children registered in 2020 compared to 219,000 in 2019, a decline of 14.5%). In terms of the rate per 100 population, the decline was seen across all age groups- with the largest decrease reported in the 3 and 4-year-old age groups.

The variation in the rate of children registered (per 100 population) with daycare of children services between 2014 and 2020 is illustrated in Figure 2 below.

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



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

On 31 December 2020 there were 7,983 early learning and childcare services in Scotland with a total combined capacity of 203,570 places. Of this total, 3,588 were daycare of children services providing a total of 176,130 places. Compared to 2019, the number of daycare services has fallen by 55 services, however the available capacity has increased by 3,510 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 5,840 compared to 2019 (a 4.7% increase), with the vast majority of these additional places coming from local authority nursery services. Capacity in local authority operated nurseries has increased by 5,570 places compared to 2019, accounting for 95.4% of the increase in total capacity in 2020.

Compared to 2014, the number of places available in nursery services has increased by 19.5%, from 108,440 to 129,620 places. The number of places available in local authority nursery services has increased since 2014 by 15,900 places.

The number of childminding services has continued to decrease in 2020. There were 4,395 childminders operating at 31 December 2020, providing a total of 27,440 places. There has been a 7.5% decrease in the number of childminding services and a 6.9% decrease in the number of places available in childminding services compared to 2019. Comparing with 2014, there were 1,707 fewer services operating, which is a 28.0% decrease in the number of services resulting in 26.9% drop in the number of places available.

Overall, there has been a net increase in capacity across the whole early learning and childcare sector (childminders and daycare of children) compared to 2019. On 31 December 2020, there were a total of 203,570 places, which is an increase of 1,470 more places (a 0.7% increase) compared to 2019. Compared to 2014, there were 8,270 more places available, which is a 4.2% increase.

Table 2 below illustrates the numbers of services operating and number of places available in daycare of children and childminding services over time

**Table 2: Number of services and total capacity, 2014-2020 (all services, daycare of children and childminding services)**

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>All early learning and childcare services</b>							
Number of services	9,859	9,726	9,402	9,127	8,754	8,395	7,983
Total capacity	195,300	196,400	200,190	199,870	200,110	202,100	203,570
<b>Childminders</b>							
Number of services	6,102	5,954	5,669	5,426	5,108	4,752	4,395
Total capacity	37,540	36,700	35,180	33,610	31,650	29,480	27,440
<b>Daycare of children services</b>							
Number of services	3,757	3,722	3,733	3,701	3,646	3,643	3,588
Total capacity	157,760	162,700	165,010	166,260	168,460	172,620	176,130

The number of childminders registered decreased by 7.5% compared to 2019. In part this was due to fewer new services registering, with only 220 new childminders registering in 2020 compared to 302 new registrations in 2019 (and 396 in 2018). In addition, 626 childminding services cancelled their registration and ceased operating during 2020. In the services that cancelled during 2020, the average length of time that service had operated for was 8.6 years.

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 childminder’s 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 2020 from 47.4 to 49.1 (see table 3 below). This increase is accounted for mainly in the large increase in the number of places in nursery services.

**Table 3: Average number of places per service available in childminding and daycare of childcare services on 31 December 2014 - 2020.**

Average number of places	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Childminding	6.2	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	49.1

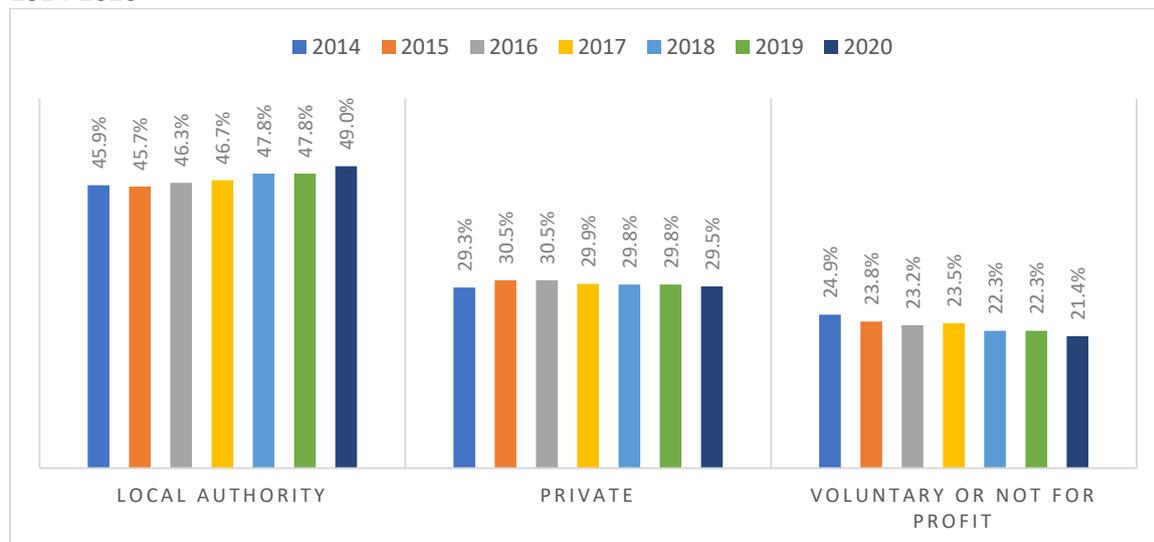
**Services by provider sector**

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, 49.0% were provided by local authorities (which includes 3 nursery services run by health boards). 29.5% were privately operated services while 21.4% 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 2014-2020**



### 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 4 below.

**Table 4: Number of registered services by main service type on 31 December 2014-2020**

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	% change 2019 to 2020	% change 2014 to 2020
Childminding	6,102	5,954	5,669	5,426	5,105	4,752	4,395	-7.51%	-27.97%
Children and family centre	139	149	161	151	136	131	119	-9.16%	-14.39%
Creche	83	78	73	75	63	56	43	-23.21%	-48.19%
Holiday playscheme	50	48	44	43	39	45	39	-13.33%	-22.00%
Nursery	2,443	2,449	2,468	2,475	2,467	2,493	2,516	0.92%	2.99%
Out of school care	703	726	739	738	748	738	716	-2.98%	1.85%
Playgroup	291	272	248	219	193	180	155	-13.89%	-46.74%
No single service type*	48	50	0	0	0	0	0	n/a	n/a
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,859</b>	<b>9,726</b>	<b>9,402</b>	<b>9,127</b>	<b>8,754</b>	<b>8,395</b>	<b>7,983</b>	<b>-4.91%</b>	<b>-19.03%</b>
<b>Total (not inc. Childminding)</b>	<b>3,757</b>	<b>3,772</b>	<b>3,733</b>	<b>3,701</b>	<b>3,646</b>	<b>3,643</b>	<b>3,588</b>	<b>-1.51%</b>	<b>-4.50%</b>

\* 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 5 below, and supporting table 22, compare in detail the total capacity and average number of places in 2014, 2019 and 2020.

**Table 5: Total capacity and average number of places comparing 31 December 2014, 2019 and 2020**

	2014		2019		2020	
	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	29,480	6.2	27,440	6.2
Children and family centre	7,380	53.1	8,100	61.8	7,340	61.7
Creche	3,100	37.3	1,710	30.5	1,380	32.1
Holiday playscheme	2,030	40.6	1,540	34.2	1,330	34.2
Nursery	108,440	44.4	123,780	49.7	129,620	51.5
Out of school care	28,510	40.6	33,340	45.2	32,800	45.8
Playgroup	6,800	23.4	4,160	23.1	3,660	23.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>195,310</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>202,100</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>203,570</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total (not inc. Childminding)</b>	<b>157,760</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>172,620</b>	<b>47.4</b>	<b>176,130</b>	<b>49.1</b>

### 3. Early learning and childcare funding in Scotland

Funded early learning and childcare (ELC) is available to all 3 and 4-year-olds and eligible 2-year-olds in Scotland. In August 2021, the entitlement increased to 1,140 hours per year. The expansion of funded ELC, originally intended for August 2020, was paused in April 2020 to give local authorities the flexibility to focus on responding to the Covid-19 pandemic.

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, playgroups and children and family centres compared to 2019. The proportion of services providing funded places between 2014 and 2020 is presented in Table 6 below and in more detail in supporting Table 27c.

**Table 6: Proportion of services providing funded early learning and childcare on 31 December 2014-2020**

Care Service type	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Nurseries	92.0%	92.6%	93.9%	94.1%	94.5%	96.1%	97.5%
Children and family centres	76.0%	84.0%	72.0%	75.5%	84.6%	86.3%	86.6%
Playgroups	69.0%	72.0%	75.4%	74.9%	75.7%	75.6%	78.7%

- Most services (56.6%) offering funded places provide these for children aged 3 years and older only. A further 41.6% of services offer funded places for 2-year-olds in addition to children aged 3 or older, which is an increase from 34.4% in 2019.
- Only 1.8% of services offering funded places do so exclusively for 2-year-olds.
- 27.2% 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 (66.4%) that offer funded places do so exclusively for children aged 3 and 4 years, however this rate has decreased since last year (73.2% in 2019) suggesting a shift towards more services offering funded places for 2-year-olds.
- The majority of private and voluntary or not for profit nurseries that provide funded places now offer funded places for 2-year-olds (most of these offer places for 2-year-olds in addition to 3 and 4-year-olds).
- 43.5% of nurseries offer funded places for 2-year-olds (including those offering places for 2-year-olds and 3 and 4-year-olds). This is an increase from 32.5% in 2019.

See Table 7 and Table 8 below for a further breakdown by age groups, service type and nurseries by sector.

**Table 7: 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	10.7%	85.4%	3.9%
Nursery	0.9%	39.5%	59.5%
Playgroup	12.3%	45.1%	42.6%
<b>All services offering funded places</b>	<b>1.8%</b>	<b>41.6%</b>	<b>56.6%</b>

**Table 8: Nursery services offering funded places by age groups and sector**

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	0.6%	29.7%	69.8%
Private	1.4%	59.1%	39.4%
Voluntary or Not for Profit	2.1%	48.1%	49.7%
<b>All nurseries offering funded places</b>	<b>0.9%</b>	<b>39.5%</b>	<b>59.5%</b>

**Quality theme evaluations in services offering funded places**

In 90.8% of services offering funded places, the quality was found to be good or better in all quality themes compared to 81.9% of services delivering the same type of provision but not offering funded places.

For nursery services that offered funded places in particular, 91.0% of services overall were evaluated as good or better in all themes. Compared to nursery services that don't offer funded places where 52.0% 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 9 below shows the comparison by sector between nurseries offering funded places and those that do not.

**Table 9: 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
<b>Yes</b>	Local authority	94.1%
	Private	84.3%
	Voluntary/not for profit	89.3%
<b>Nurseries offering funded places</b>		<b>91.0%</b>
<b>No</b>	Local authority	n/a*
	Private	53.5%
	Voluntary/not for profit	42.9%
<b>Nurseries without funded places</b>		<b>52.0%</b>
<b>All Nurseries</b>		<b>90.2%</b>

\* note: all local authority nurseries provide funded places

There is a similar pattern with playgroups – the services providing funded places were found to be of a higher quality compared to those not offering funded places overall.

This confirms the fact that high quality care is one of the key criteria for becoming a funded provider, as outlined in the national standard for funded providers.<sup>3</sup>

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

### Quality theme evaluations between 2014 and 2020

Each year 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 36.9% this rate remains greater than daycare of children services that didn't offer funded places. The proportion of these services that were evaluated as very good or excellent was 20.5%.

Table 10 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 10: 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 2020**

	Year						
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>% of services found to be good or better in all quality themes</b>	93.2%	91.9%	91.4%	91.0%	90.6%	90.2%	90.8%
<b>% of services found to be very good or excellent in all quality themes</b>	49.1%	48.1%	45.8%	42.7%	40.5%	38.1%	36.9%

### 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.

Across all areas and deprivation levels, 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 11 and Table 12 below show the proportion of funded services evaluated as good or better in all themes by SIMD quintile.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/funding-follows-the-child-and-the-national-standard-for-early-learning-and-childcare-providers-interim-guidance---update-march-2021/pages/national-standard-for-elc-providers---requirements-from-august-2021/>

**Table 11: Quality of funded services by SIMD quintile**

<b>SIMD2020 Quintile</b>	<b>% of services found to be good or better in all quality themes</b>
1 (most deprived)	91.9%
2	89.8%
3	90.0%
4	93.2%
5 (least deprived)	88.8%
<b>All services offering funded places</b>	<b>90.8%</b>

**Table 12: Quality of funded services by SIMD quintile and sector**

<b>SIMD(2020) Quintile</b>	<b>Sector</b>	<b>% of services found to be good or better in all quality themes</b>
<b>1 (most deprived)</b>	Local Authority	94.3%
	Private	85.4%
	Voluntary or Not for Profit	87.5%
<b>2</b>	Local Authority	93.4%
	Private	78.0%
	Voluntary or Not for Profit	89.1%
<b>3</b>	Local Authority	93.1%
	Private	84.3%
	Voluntary or Not for Profit	82.9%
<b>4</b>	Local Authority	96.9%
	Private	88.8%
	Voluntary or Not for Profit	88.8%
<b>5 (least deprived)</b>	Local Authority	93.3%
	Private	83.4%
	Voluntary or Not for Profit	91.2%
<b>All services offering funded places</b>		<b>90.8%</b>

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 rural areas, accessible small towns and smaller urban areas, while the areas with the lowest proportion of high quality funded services were remote small towns.

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 was one exception. In remote small towns, funded services run by voluntary or not for profit providers had the highest rate of high performing services.

Table 13 and Table 14 below show the proportion of funded services evaluated as good or better in all themes by urban rural classification.

**Table 13: Quality of funded services by urban rural classification**

<b>Urban-rural category</b>	<b>% of services found to be good or better in all quality themes</b>
Large urban areas	89.5%
Other urban areas	91.1%
Accessible small towns	91.1%
Remote small towns	88.0%
Accessible rural	93.6%
Remote rural	90.5%
<b>All services offering funded places</b>	<b>90.8%</b>

**Table 14: Quality of funded services by urban rural category and sector**

<b>Urban-rural category</b>	<b>Sector</b>	<b>% of services found to be good or better in all quality themes</b>
a. Large urban areas	Local Authority	93.8%
	Private	82.2%
	Voluntary or Not for Profit	93.1%
b. Other urban areas	Local Authority	94.2%
	Private	85.4%
	Voluntary or Not for Profit	87.2%
c. Accessible small towns	Local Authority	96.1%
	Private	89.7%
	Voluntary or Not for Profit	77.5%
d. Remote small towns	Local Authority	92.6%
	Private	70.0%
	Voluntary or Not for Profit	94.4%
e. Accessible rural	Local Authority	96.0%
	Private	90.3%
	Voluntary or Not for Profit	86.3%
f. Remote rural	Local Authority	92.1%
	Private	77.8%
	Voluntary or Not for Profit	86.1%
<b>All services offering funded places</b>		<b>90.8%</b>

### **Childminders offering funded early learning and childcare places**

In our December 2020 annual returns, we incorporated new questions that expanded upon the questions we previously asked childminding services about the provision of funded places and becoming a funded service. As this is the first year we have collected this data, there is no previous data to compare to. As this is the first year we have reported this data, these figures should be regarded as estimates.

- At 31 December 2020, there were 1,316 childminders that been approved to provide funded ELC places in Scotland. This is 29.9% of all childminders operating.
- Of these services approved to provide funded places, 851 of them were delivering this provision at 31 December 2020, which is 19.4% of all childminders operating.
- This means that only 64.6% of the childminders approved to provide funded ELC places were delivering this provision at 31 December 2020.
- Most of the childminders (84.1%) that were delivering funded provision were doing so for children aged 3 and over.

There were 2,328 childminding services that reported to have not been approved to deliver funded ELC.

- Most of these had chosen not to apply to become a funded provider (69.5%)
- A further quarter (24.7%) said that they had not applied but would consider doing so in the future.
- An additional 4.9% said that they were in the process of applying to become a funded provider.
- A small number (0.8%) had applied but had not been successful in becoming a funded provider.

#### 4. The quality of early learning and childcare services

The quality of early learning and childcare services continued to be very high overall in 2020.

- In 44.2% of childminders the quality was found to be very good or excellent in all quality themes assessed (slightly higher than the 44.0% reported in 2019).
- The proportion of childminders evaluated as good, very good or excellent in all quality themes remains very high at 92.6% (slightly higher than the 91.7% reported in 2019).
- In 33.0% of daycare of children services, the quality was found to be very good or excellent in all quality themes assessed (slightly lower than the 33.7% in 2019).
- The rate of daycare of children services where all quality themes were evaluated as good, very good or excellent remains high, with 88.7% of services achieving this standard (slightly higher than the 87.7% in 2019).
- In particular, nursery services continued to provide a high standard of care, with 36.2% evaluated as very good or excellent in all themes, and 90.2% found to be good, very good or excellent in all themes assessed (compared to 37.2% and 89.1% in 2019 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 0.03% 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. For creche services, the voluntary/not for profit sector had the highest rate of services achieving this high standard, and for playgroups and out of school care, the private sector had the highest rate of services achieving this.

Table 15 below shows the percentage of services achieving the highest grades, comparing year on year since 2014.

**Table 15: 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 2020**

		2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
All themes very good or excellent	Childminding	49.6%	48.8%	48.7%	47.6%	45.2%	44.0%	44.2%
	Daycare of Children	42.2%	41.5%	40.3%	37.8%	35.7%	33.7%	33.0%
All themes good, very good or excellent	Childminding	91.0%	91.8%	91.8%	92.1%	91.9%	91.7%	92.6%
	Daycare of Children	90.3%	88.4%	87.6%	88.3%	88.0%	87.7%	88.7%

#### 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 playgroups, 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 16 and Table 17 below illustrate the differences in quality evaluations between sectors.

**Table 16: 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	92.6%	n/a
Children and family centre	95.0%	n/a	93.9%
Creche	90.0%	54.5%	68.4%
Holiday Playscheme	100.0%	100.0%	88.9%
Nursery	94.1%	82.3%	87.5%
Out of School Club	88.9%	82.9%	85.0%
Playgroup	n/a	88.9%	80.9%

**Table 17: 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	44.2%	n/a
Children and family centre	55.0%	n/a	45.5%
Creche	10.0%	18.2%	26.3%
Holiday Playscheme	71.4%	33.3%	33.3%
Nursery	41.7%	24.6%	35.9%
Out of School Club	20.0%	22.0%	21.2%
Playgroup	n/a	22.2%	19.1%

### Services where significant improvement is needed

- Around one in eight nurseries and one in 14 childminders were found to be adequate or poorer in at least one quality theme.
- In crèches, this rate has increased to almost one in three services (31.6%), 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 18 and Table 19 below show the number and percentage of services where improvement is needed.

**Table 18: Number and percentage of services evaluated as adequate, weak or unsatisfactory in one or more themes by sector, comparing 2020 to 2019**

<b>Daycare type</b>	<b>Number of services (2020)</b>	<b>% of services (2020)</b>	<b>Number of services (2019)</b>	<b>% of services (2019)</b>
Childminding	285	7.4%	356	8.3%
Children and family centre	2	6.1%	9	7.1%
Creche	6	31.6%	14	26.4%
Holiday Playscheme	2	11.1%	2	6.5%
Nursery	23	12.5%	262	10.9%
Out of School Club	48	15.0%	106	15.7%
Playgroup	27	19.1%	34	19.9%

**Table 19: Number and percentage of services evaluated as weak or unsatisfactory in all themes by sector, comparing 2020 to 2019**

<b>Daycare type</b>	<b>Number of services (2020)</b>	<b>% of services (2020)</b>	<b>Number of services (2019)</b>	<b>% of services (2019)</b>
Childminding	1	0.03%	3	0.1%
Children and family centre	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Creche	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Holiday Playscheme	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Nursery	4	0.2%	3	0.1%
Out of School Club	4	0.6%	3	0.4%
Playgroup	0	0.0%	2	1.2%

## 5. Complaints in Early Learning and Childcare services

During 2020, the Care Inspectorate actioned every complaint that it received and responded appropriately in the context of the pandemic to keep children attending services and ELC staff safe. There was a shift in the method of resolution during 2020. More complaints were resolved quickly through direct provider action, and more were logged as intelligence. Crucially, all intelligence from complaints was assessed and used to inform and focus our work. This included whether or not to proceed with an onsite inspection, the majority of which focused in depth on Covid-19 related issues along with the overall wellbeing of children attending the service.

In response to the pandemic, we developed an enhanced risk assessment process to identify complaints that required us to visit to ensure the health and wellbeing needs of children were being met. Where a visit to the service was not appropriate, we engaged with complainants, providers and other partners to resolve issues at service level, using the alternative pathways to resolution in our complaints process where appropriate.

This is reflected in the numbers presented below on our use of the pathways to resolution during 2020.

We actioned all complaints and concerns received using the different pathways as follows.

- **Intelligence: Use the information given by the person making the complaint as intelligence about the service, to help inform future scrutiny activity:** In 2020 we recorded 306 concerns as intelligence, a total of 82 about childminders and 224 regarding daycare of children services.
- **Direct service action (previously known as front-line resolution) and investigation by the care provider:** In 2020, 164 complaints were resolved by the service directly or passed to the provider to investigate – 31 in childminding services and 133 in daycare of children.
- **Investigation by the Care Inspectorate: depending on our assessment of risk, we may decide that we need to undertake our own investigation.** During 2020 we completed investigations into 94 complaints, 21 in childminders and 73 in daycare of children services.

Through our investigations, we upheld 33 complaints about daycare of children services, which was 45.2% of all investigations completed. This is lower than the 56 upheld complaints (45.2% of complaints completed) seen in the previous year.

We upheld 9 complaints about childminders (42.9% of complaints investigated) a decrease compared to the 34 upheld complaints (42.5%) in the year before.

The majority of the complaints upheld about daycare of children services were about private nurseries (69.7%) with a further 15.2% about out of school care services. Local authority and voluntary or not for profit nurseries each accounted for 6.1% of all upheld complaints about daycare of children services.

The rates of complaints upheld in childminders and daycare of children services remain relatively low compared to most other care service types regulated by the Care Inspectorate as has been the case in previous years.

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: children's general wellbeing, exceeding the maximum number of children allowed, children's emotional wellbeing, and other issues relating to conditions of registration.
- Of the complaints we upheld about daycare of children services, the main reasons for complaints were: staffing levels, children's general wellbeing, children's emotional wellbeing, fitness of premises or environment and issues around service policies and procedures.

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

## 6. 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 (82%) offer a service for children of all ages between 2 and 11 years old and 61% 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 (85.3%) offered a service for babies aged under 1, with around a third (32.3%) of voluntary or not for profit nurseries and 5.1% 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). 1.2% of services could offer British Sign Language and 2.9% could deliver the service in another language, most commonly Polish, French or German and also communication languages such as Makaton.

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 6.5% (233 services) could provide the service in another language.

The provision of languages other than English has increased compared to 2019.

On 31 December 2020, 1.2% of nurseries (30 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 daycare of children services, 2.1% (75 services) followed a Suzuki/Montessori philosophy and 1.0% (36 services) followed a Steiner philosophy. Both of these rates have increased compared to 2019 and 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, 74.1% of early years services offered care before school hours. This has increased slightly from 73.1% in 2019.

- Around two fifths of local authority nurseries (39.4%) provided an early morning service. This is considerably lower than the rate in private nurseries (84.3%) however, the early morning provision in local authority nurseries has seen a 13.9% increase compared to 2019 (an increase of 75 services).
- The rate of childminders offering early morning provision increased slightly to 93.0% this year (from 92.2% in 2019).
- The rate of out of school care services providing an early morning service increased to 51.4% (from 50.4% in 2019).
- Overall, 82.8% of services provided care after school hours, a slight increase compared to the 82.3% seen in 2019.
- Almost all childminders (97.7%) offered their service after school hours.

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

### During school holidays

Local authority run nurseries and playgroups (all sectors) had the lowest proportion of services offered during the school holidays. In contrast to this 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.

Please see supporting Tables 30a – 30e 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 2020.

- 79.4% of daycare services overall and 89.0% of nurseries offered whole-day sessions or the choice of whole or part-day sessions.

Table 20 below shows the percentage of services offering whole and part-day sessions between 2014 and 2020.

Table 20- Sessions available between 2014 and 2020 in daycare of children services and nurseries

**20a- All daycare of children services**

Sessions available	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Whole-day only	3.0%	3.1%	3.2%	3.5%	4.4%	6.2%	16.0%
Whole-day and part-day sessions offered	45.7%	47.7%	51.4%	54.7%	58.3%	64.1%	63.4%
Part-day only	50.8%	48.6%	44.5%	40.8%	37.3%	29.7%	20.6%

**20b- All nursery services**

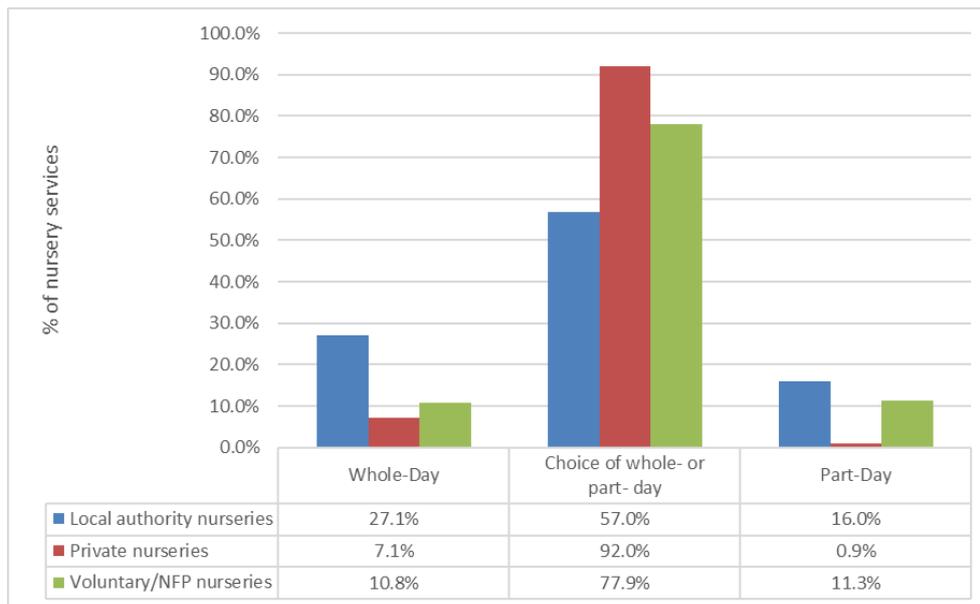
Sessions available	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Whole-day only	1.4%	1.6%	1.6%	2.4%	3.7%	6.4%	19.8%
Whole-day and part-day sessions offered	46.4%	49.5%	54.3%	58.6%	63.8%	71.9%	69.2%
Part-day only	51.7%	48.9%	43.8%	39.2%	32.5%	21.7%	11.0%

In 2020, there was a large increase in the proportion of services offering whole-day places compared to previous years and a notable decrease in the number of services offering part-day places only. This is driven by large increases in the provision of whole-day places in nursery services.

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

- Virtually all private nurseries (99.1%) typically offered a choice of part days or full days (an increase compared to 93.5% in 2019).
- The majority (84.0%) of local authority run nurseries offered full day places only or a choice of full or part days (an increase compared to 69.0% in 2019).

**Figure 4: Sessions available in nurseries by sector, on 31 December 2020**



Some services also offer shorter flexible sessions in addition to the full or part day provision. In 2020, nursery services reported an increased number that they provide shorter flexible sessions along with full or part day provision.

- 21.7% of all nursery services offered short flexible sessions (compared to 19.0% in 2019)
- 26.3% of private nurseries (25.7% in 2019) and 18.7% of local authority nurseries (15.0% in 2019) offered shorter flexible sessions.

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

### Provision of meals and snacks

Most childminders (92.5%) continue to provide meals in their service (similar to the 92.6% in 2019). The meals were provided by the service (20.6%), or by the parents only (49.8%) or by both (22.1%). Almost all childminders (99.2%) provided snacks for the children in the services, at a similar level to 2019 (99.3%).

Around 73% 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 64% reported in 2019 and 55% in 2018. 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 67.1% 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 (43.4%) and food provided by both the service and by parents (39.4%).

Most local authority nurseries (86.2%) served meals. This has increased from 70.2% in 2019 (and 53.9% in 2018). Meals were served in 98.8% of private nurseries and 91.8% of voluntary/not for profit nurseries (whether supplied by the service, parents or both).

Almost all daycare of children services (99.5%) 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 2020. 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 2019 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 2020 to 31 December 2020) and the Care Inspectorate service list (as on 31 December 2020). 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, 2018 and 2019.

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 2020 did not have to submit an annual return for December 2020, we encouraged them to do so.

Of the 7,983 childcare services registered with the Care Inspectorate on 31 December 2020, 7,033 (88%) submitted an annual return, similar to the 89% 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 2020) 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 2020) 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 2020
- whether daycare of children services provide funded places on 31 December 2020
- the number of children registered with services that use the services for out of school care as of 31 December 2020
- 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.nrscotland.gov.uk/statistics-and-data/statistics/statistics-by-theme/population/population-estimates/2011-based-special-area-population-estimates/population-estimates-by-urban-rural-classification>

The National Records of Scotland mid-year population estimates (mid 2020) 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-2020>

### 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 2020

Main service type	Response rate December 2020 Annual Return
Childminders	83%
Children and Family Centre	94%
Creche	77%
Holiday Playscheme	82%
Nursery	97%
Out of School Care	94%
Playgroup	95%
<b>All services</b>	<b>88%</b>
<b>All services (excl. childminders)</b>	<b>96%</b>

We took the following approach 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 2020, but submitted a return for either 2019 or 2018, the information submitted in the most recent historic annual return was used to impute the missing data for 2020. Where a service re-registered (for example, due to a change in ownership or service provider) and information was missing for 2019, the most recent historic information from the previously registered service was used (if an annual return was submitted in 2018 or 2017). For childminders the information from annual returns from 2017, 2018 and 2019 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 2019 or 2018 (or 2017 for childminders), or where a service was newly registered in 2020 (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 2020

In the December 2020 annual returns, we introduced new questions on funded early learning and childcare provision in childminding services, replacing those from the previous form. These questions were developed in collaboration with stakeholders from the Scottish Government and the Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA). The revised questions along with the available response options are presented below.

- At 31 December: Had you been approved by your local authority to deliver funded Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) to eligible children and are you delivering this service? (This is the entitlement of funded early learning and childcare under the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014).
  - Approved to deliver funded ELC to eligible children of all ages, but I am not currently delivering it
  - Approved to deliver funded ELC to eligible children of all ages, and I am currently delivering funded ELC to 2-year-olds
  - Approved to deliver funded ELC to eligible children of all ages, and I am currently delivering funded ELC to children aged 3 and over
  - Approved to deliver funded ELC to eligible 2-year-old children only, but I am not currently delivering it
  - Approved to deliver funded ELC to eligible 2-year-old children only and I am currently delivering it
  - Approved to deliver funded ELC to eligible children aged 3 and over only, but I am not currently delivering it
  - Approved to deliver funded ELC to eligible children aged 3 and over and I am currently delivering it
  - I have not been approved to deliver funded ELC
- At 31 December, if you had not been approved to deliver funded ELC, why was this?
  - I was in the process of applying to become a funded ELC provider
  - I have not applied to become a funded ELC provider
  - I have not applied to become a funded ELC provider but would consider applying in the future
  - I have applied but was not successful in my application to become a funded ELC provider

## **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 child attending the service.
- **Quality of Environment:** how the service supports appropriate care and learning opportunities for children, environmental factors for example, how clean, well maintained and accessible it is, the atmosphere of the service and how welcoming it is.
- **Quality of Staffing:** the quality of the staff including how staff work together to support children, safer recruitment, ongoing professional development and learning, qualifications and training.
- **Quality of Management and Leadership:** how the service is managed and led and how it develops through a robust quality assurance process to meet the needs of the children 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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