



Early learning and childcare statistics 2022

The provision and use of registered daycare of
children and childminding services in
Scotland as at 31 December 2022

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Executive summary

This report is the latest in our annual series of statistics about the use and provision of early learning and childcare in Scotland. All daycare of children (including out of school care) and childminding services which make up early learning and childcare (ELC) must be registered with the Care Inspectorate in order to operate in Scotland. This report is based on ELC services on our register and incorporates our evaluations of the quality of these services, as well as additional information from annual returns completed by service providers. The statistics include longer term trends as well as a focus on changes in the most recent year to 31 December 2022.

Children registered with early learning and childcare services

- Overall, there were 221,290 children registered in all early learning and childcare services at 31 December 2022, similar to 221,200 in 2021.
- In 2022, there were 197,880 children registered with daycare of children services, this is an increase from 196,320 children registered in 2021. For childminding services there were 23,410 children registered in December 2022, this is a decrease from 24,880 children registered in 2021.
- The largest percentage increase in the number of children registered was in holiday playschemes (10.3% increase) and out of school care (7.1% increase), with the largest percentage decreases in childminding services (5.9% decrease) and playgroups (11.2% decrease).

Number of registered services and service capacity (places)

- There were 3,514 daycare of children services as of 31 December 2022, 59 fewer compared to 2021. However, the average size of daycare of children services continued to increase, rising from 50.3 places in 2021 to 51.2 in 2022.
- The number of childminding services registered continued to decrease, falling by 11.7% in 2022 to 3,530 compared to 3,998 in 2021.
- The capacity in early learning and childcare (including childminding services) decreased by 1.3%, from 204,700 in 2021 to 201,960 registered places at 31 December 2022.
- The decrease of places in 2022 was driven primarily by childminding services where capacity decreased by 2,830 places (11.4%) from 24,870 places in 2021 to 22,040 places in 2022.
- Capacity in daycare of children services increased by 90 places overall in 2022. This increase was driven by nursery services: most of the other daycare of children

service types (creches, holiday playschemes, out of school care, and playgroups) had decreases in places or remained the same.

Funded places and service availability

- The proportion of daycare of children services providing funded early learning and childcare increased overall in 2022: the proportion of nurseries offering funded places in 2022 was similar to that in 2021, whilst for playgroups and children and family centres there was an increase of 1-2 percentage points.
- The proportion of registered childminding services approved to deliver funded places at 31 December 2022 was 34.6%, an increase from 33.0% in 2021.
- The rate of daycare of children services that offer whole-day sessions has continued to increase year on year: 86.6% offered this as an option in 2022. 96.6% of nursery services now offer whole day sessions.

Quality of services

- The quality of services was high, based on the evaluations held by services at 31 December 2022, with 92.0% of childminding and 88.5% of daycare of children services holding evaluations of good or better for all themes or assessed key questions.
- The proportion of services holding evaluations of weak or unsatisfactory for all assessed themes or key questions, at 31 December, was low.
- Overall, 90.1% of daycare of children services offering funded ELC places held evaluations of good or better in all assessed themes or key questions at 31 December 2022.

Geographical variance in service provision

- The areas with the highest rate of funded ELC services with evaluations of good or better in all assessed themes or key questions at 31 December 2022 were accessible rural areas (92.4%), accessible small towns (93.6%) and other urban areas (91%), while the areas with the lowest proportion of high-quality funded services were remote small towns (85.3%).
- There is no relationship between prevalence of good quality funded services (those evaluated as good or better in all assessed themes or key questions) and levels of SIMD, indicating that a consistent level of good quality funded provision is available in all areas. The proportion of public sector services that offered funded places that were graded good or better is consistent across all SIMD quintiles.

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 2022– 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 childminding services, which this report will collectively refer to as early learning and childcare services¹. For the purposes of this report, this includes daycare services 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. Further detailed definitions are in appendix 1.

¹ When reporting on the number of children registered with early learning and childcare services, we exclude crèche services, as they predominantly provide a drop-in service.

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

Overall, there were 221,290 children registered with an early learning and childcare service on 31 December 2022. This is similar to the 221,200 children registered in December 2021 (Figure 1).

197,880 children (89.4% of the total) were registered with daycare of children services and 23,410 children (10.6% of the total) were registered with childminding services. Compared to 2021, this is an increase in the number of children registered with daycare services and a continued decline in the number of children registered with childminding services (Figure 2).

Holiday playschemes and out of school care had increases (of 10.3% and 7.1% respectively) in the number of registered children in 2022 compared to 2021. Over the same period there were decreases in nurseries which fell by 1.0%, and playgroups which fell by 11.2%. For playgroups, the decrease in registered children has been a long-term trend. See Figure 1, as well as supporting table 1.

When looking at the long-term trend, the number of children registered with day care of children services (Figure 1) increased between 2014 and 2019, dropped in 2020 and increased in 2021 and 2022. The drop in 2020 coincided with the early stages of the Covid-19 pandemic and this will have contributed to the drop in children registered that year. In August 2021, the Scottish Government expanded funding for early learning and childcare from 600 to 1,140 hours per year (30 hours per week if taken during school term time). In preparation for the implementation of this expansion, more services began to offer full time places and as a result children may need to be registered in fewer services. Our statistics count each child more than once if they use more than one service. We expect that our statistics now include less double counting than before, and this may account for at least part of the drop observed.

For further detailed information, please see supporting table 1 in the supporting tables spreadsheet in the registered places tab.

Figure 1: Number of children registered with early learning and childcare services by main type of service in 2014, 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022.

Care service main type	December 2014	December 2019	December 2020	December 2021	December 2022	Change in number of children registered - 2021 vs 2022
Childminding	34,680	31,560	26,260	24,880	23,410	-1,470
Daycare of children services	211,430	219,000	187,340	196,320	197,880	1,560
Daycare of children by main type of service:						
Children and Family Centre	10,100	10,430	8,480	8,160	8,260	100
Holiday Playscheme	4,460	4,690	4,070	3,780	4,170	390
Nursery	142,790	145,970	132,360	140,420	139,020	-1,400
Out of school care	46,080	53,260	38,810	40,480	43,340	2,860
Playgroup	8,000	4,650	3,620	3,480	3,090	-390
All care service types	246,110	250,560	213,600²	221,200	221,290	90

Figure 2: Share of the number of children registered with early learning and childcare services on 31 December 2014, 2020, 2021 and 2022.

ELC/Higher Main Type	December 2014	December 2020	December 2021	December 2022
Childminding	14.1%	12.3%	11.2%	10.6%
Daycare of children	85.9%	87.7%	88.8%	89.4%

² Correction: the total number of children registered with childminding services in 2020 was 26,260 instead of 25,800 previously reported in error, making the total number for all care service types 213,600 in 2020 instead of the 213,140 previously reported.

Number of children registered with childminding services

In this section we present statistics on the number of children registered with and using childminding services, which is different to the capacity measure in chapter 2.

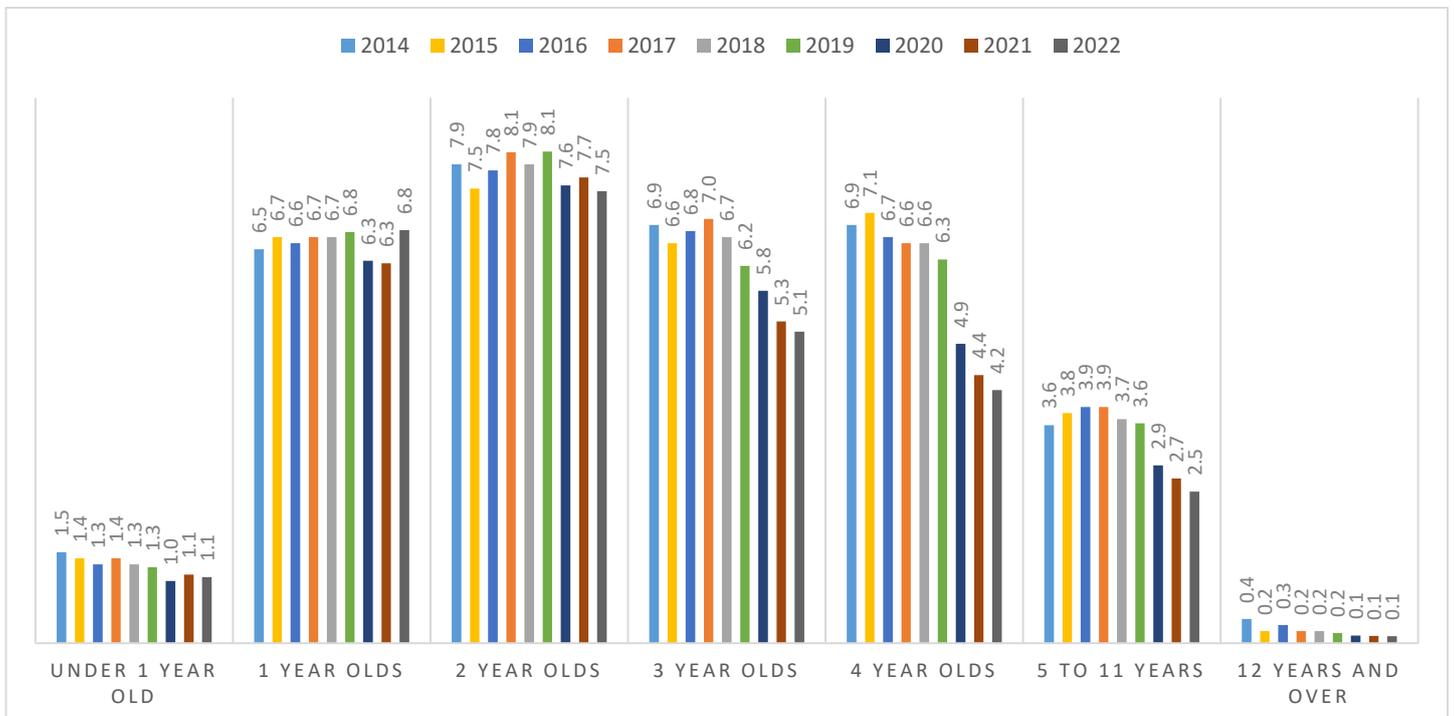
There was a 5.9% decrease in the number of children registered with childminding services between 2021 and 2022 (Figure 1).

The average number of children registered per childminding setting on 31 December 2022 was 6.6 children per service. This is an increase compared to the 6.2 children per setting in 2021.

When looking at the long-term trends for children registered with childminding services (per 100 population), the 1-year-old and 2-year-old age groups have largely maintained their levels since 2014. The rates for 3-year-olds, 4-year-olds, and 5 to 7-year-olds age groups have all been decreasing for several years (Figure 3).

As noted at the start of section 1, the recent trends may be affected by the Covid-19 pandemic and by the potential reduction in the number of children using multiple services, and therefore counted more than once, following the expansion of ELC funded hours in August 2021.

Figure 3: Rate per 100 population children registered in childminding services split by age group



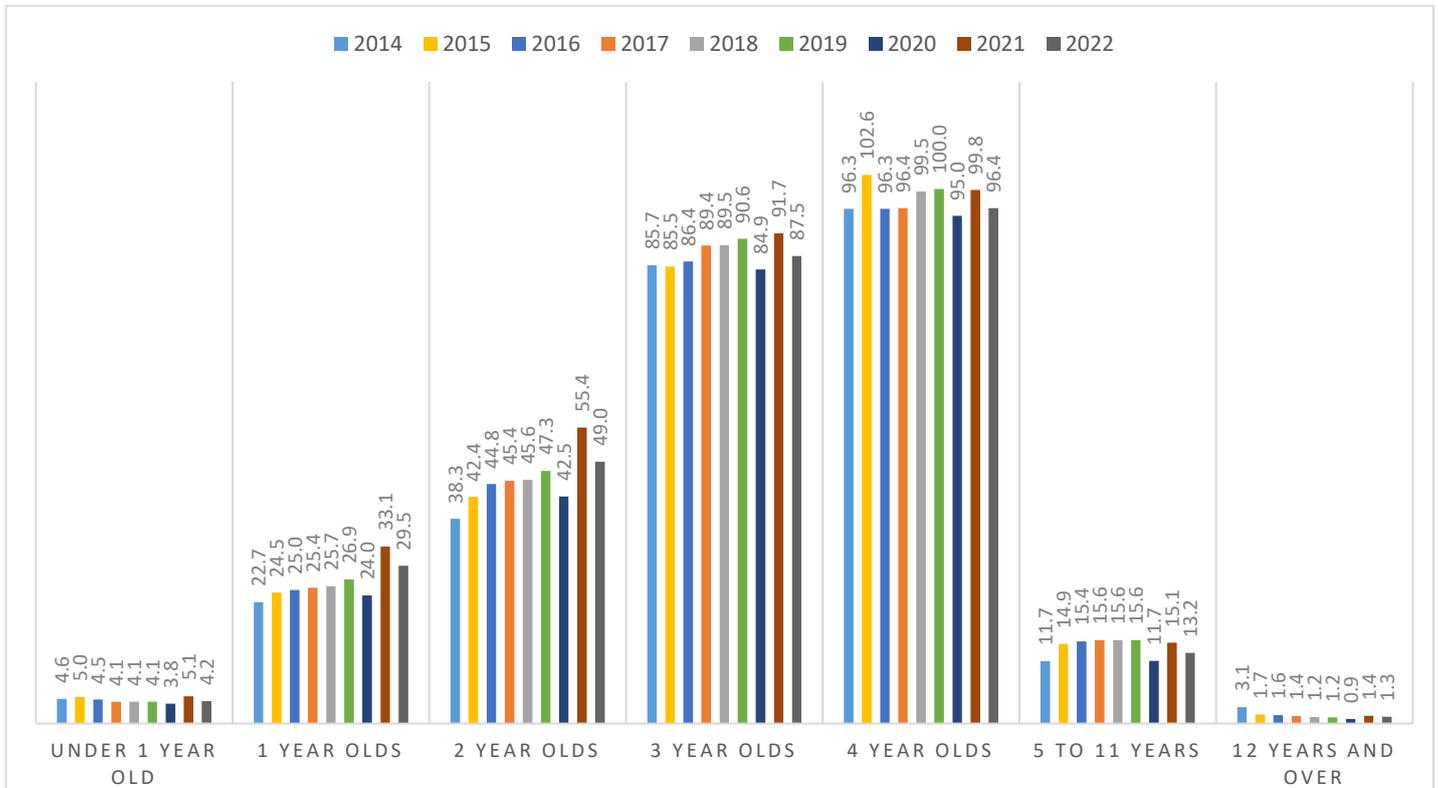
Number of children registered with daycare of children services

Overall, there was an increase in the number of children registered with daycare of children services (197,880 children registered in 2022 compared to 196,320 in 2021, an increase of 0.8%) (Figure 1).

When comparing the rate of children registered per 100 population from 2022 to 2021, there were decreases across all age groups. When looking at the long-term trend for the rate of children registered per 100 population the under-1-year-old, 3-year-old and 4-year-old, and 5-to-7-year-old age groups have maintained their levels since 2014. The 1-year-old, 2-year-old age groups have seen their levels increase since 2014, while the 12-years-and-over age group has seen its levels fall since 2014 (Figure 4).

As noted at the start of section 1, the recent trends may be affected by the Covid-19 pandemic and by the potential reduction in the number of children using multiple services, and therefore counted more than once, following the expansion of ELC funded hours in August 2021.

Figure 4: Rate per 100 population children registered in daycare of children services split by age group



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

On 31 December 2022 there were 7,044 early learning and childcare services in Scotland with a combined capacity of 201,960 places (Figure 5), which is a decrease of 2,740 places (1.3%) compared to 2021. Compared to 2014, there were 6,660 more places available, which is a 3.4% increase.

Daycare of children

Daycare of children services cover a wide range of different types 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 several different types of care and learning. For example, a nursery may also provide out of school care provision 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 2022 by service type is presented in Figure 5.

Of the 7,044 early learning and childcare services in Scotland, 3,514 were daycare of children services providing a total of 179,920 places. Compared to 2021, the number of daycare services has fallen by 59 services, however the available capacity has increased by 90 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).

Since December 2021 the capacity in creches, out of school care and playgroups has decreased, while in nurseries and children and family centres it has increased. The increase in public sector nursery capacity is the main factor behind the increase in nursery capacity and daycare of children capacity overall.

While the number of out of school care places have dropped (Figure 5) the number of children registered with these settings has increased as noted earlier in this publication.

Daycare of children - nursery services

Overall, capacity in nursery services increased by 1,160 places to 135,900 in 2022. Capacity in public sector operated nurseries increased by 1,650 places compared to 2021, while capacity in private and voluntary sector nurseries fell by 350 and 130 places respectively (see Figure 6 below).

Over the longer term, compared to 2014, the number of places available in nursery services increased by 25.3%, from 108,440 to 135,900 places. The number of places available in public sector nursery services increased 38.6% in 2022

compared to 2014. Places in private sector nurseries rose by 8.7% in 2022 compared to 2014, and by 22.0% in the voluntary and not for profit sector.

Childminding services

There were 3,530 childminding services operating at 31 December 2022, providing a total of 22,040 places. The number of childminding services continued to decrease in 2022 (see Figure 5), with a 11.7% decrease in the number of services and a 11.4% decrease in the number of places available compared to 2021.

This reflects the longer term trend: compared to 2014, there were 2,572 fewer childminding services operating, which is a 42.2% decrease in the number of services and a 41.3% drop in the number of places.

Similar to the previous year, this was in part due to fewer new services registering, with only 164 new childminding services registering in 2022.

Average places per service

Most childminding services are registered for a maximum of six children, which is the most they can care for at any one time while working on their own, including the childminder's own children. A small number of childminding services are registered for more than six children. 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 increased from 50.3 in 2021 to 51.2 in 2022 (see Figure 5). This increase is accounted for mainly by the increase in the number of places in nursery services.

Figure 5: Number of services and total capacity, 2014, 2021 and 2022, broken down by high level service type.

High level service type	2014			2021			2022		
	Total services	Total capacity	Avg places per service	Total services	Total capacity	Avg places per service	Total services	Total capacity	Avg places per service
Childminding	6,102	37,540	6.2	3,998	24,870	6.2	3,530	22,040	6.2
Daycare of children services	3,757	157,760	42.0	3,573	179,830	50.3	3,514	179,920	51.2
Daycare of children by main type of service:									
Children & Family Centre	139	7,380	53.1	107	7,250	67.8	108	7,290	67.5
Creche	83	3,100	37.3	32	1,000	31.3	33	980	29.7
Holiday Playscheme	50	2,030	40.6	35	1,180	33.7	33	1,180	35.8
Nursery	2,443	108,440	44.4	2,556	134,740	52.7	2,538	135,900	53.5
Other services	48	1,500	31.3						
Out of school care	703	28,510	40.6	711	32,470	45.7	682	31,640	46.4
Playgroup	291	6,800	23.4	132	3,200	24.2	120	2,930	24.4
All service types	9,859	195,300	19.8	7,571	204,700	27.0	7,044	201,960	28.7

Figure 6: Year on year change in service counts and capacity for nursery services only, broken down by sector.

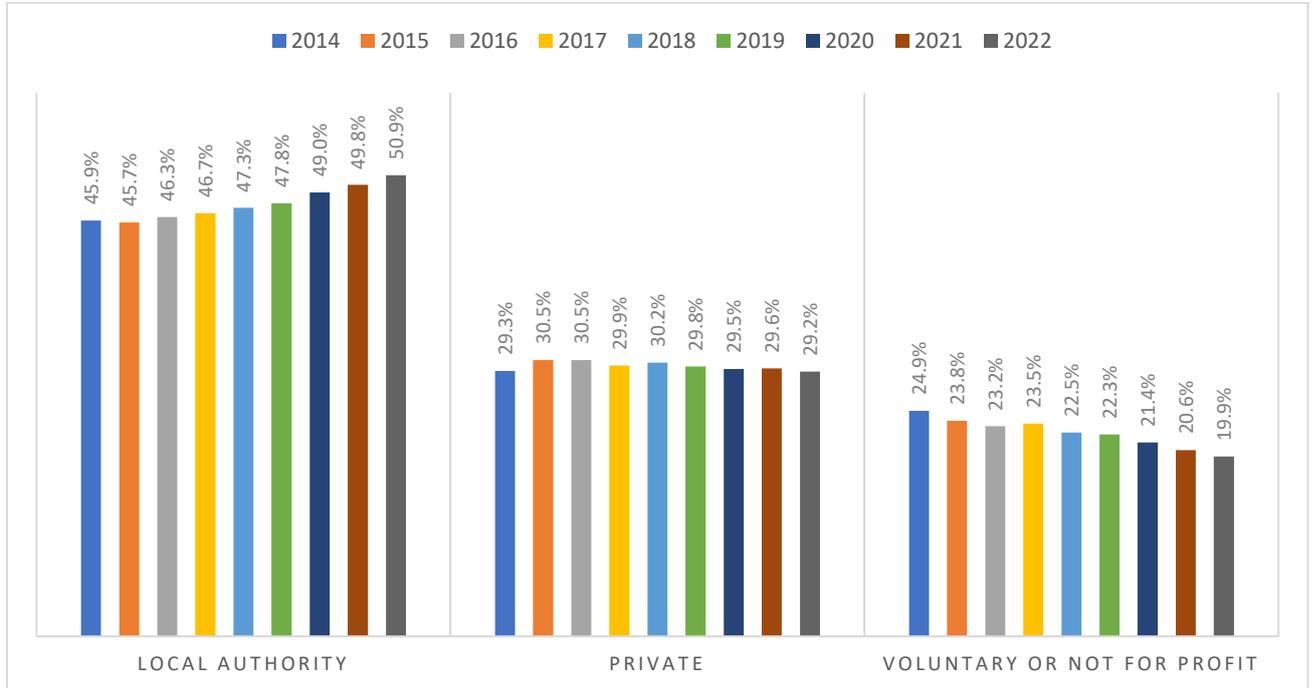
Sector	2014		2021		2022		2021 vs 2022 (%)	
	Total services	Total capacity	Total services	Total capacity	Total services	Total capacity	Change in services	Change in capacity
Public	1,494	57,060	1,585	77,430	1,594	79,080	0.6%	2.1%
Private	768	44,070	755	48,260	737	47,910	-2.4%	-0.7%
Voluntary or Not for Profit	181	7,310	216	9,050	207	8,920	-4.2%	-1.4%
Total	2,443	108,440	2,556	134,740	2,538	135,900	-0.7%	0.9%

Services by provider sector

All childminding services are privately operated, while daycare of children services are operated by a range of private, public sector (mainly local authority with a small number provided by health boards) and voluntary or not for profit service providers.

The percentage of registered daycare of children services provided by the public sector has followed a long-term trend and increased further in 2022 to 50.9%. Conversely, services provided by the voluntary or not for profit sector continued the long-term decreasing trend and has now fallen to 19.9% in 2022 (Figure 7).

Figure 7: Percentage of registered daycare of children services by provider sector on 31 December 2014-2022



3. The quality of early learning and childcare services

In June 2022 the quality framework used to evaluate ELC services changed. The new methodology evaluates services based on key questions rather than the old method of quality themes. Similar to the older grading methodology, services are graded on each of these key questions on a scale from one to six – one being unsatisfactory and six being excellent.

As this new inspection framework has only recently been adopted, there will be some ELC services that still have the quality themes framework evaluations, and some ELC services whose most recent inspection took place from 1 June 2022 and are therefore graded using the new quality framework and key questions.

The figures provided in this chapter are based on the evaluations held by services at 31 December 2022 and contains grading data derived from the old and new quality frameworks. For more information on the grading frameworks see appendix 6.

The quality of early learning and childcare services continued to be very high overall at 31 December 2022 (Figure 8).

The proportion of childminding services holding evaluations of good, very good or excellent in all assessed themes or key questions remained very high at 92.0% (slightly lower than the 92.8% reported in 2021).

The proportion of daycare of children services holding evaluations of good, very good or excellent in all assessed themes or key questions remained high, at 88.5% (higher than the 87.7% in 2021).

In particular, nursery services continued to provide a high standard of care, with 89.5% holding evaluations of good, very good or excellent in all assessed themes or key questions (compared to 88.8% in 2021) (Figure 9).

Services found to be weak or unsatisfactory in all assessed key questions continue to be rare, with only 0.7% of daycare of children services and 0.2% of childminding services at this level.

Figure 8: Percentage of services holding evaluations of good or better, and very good or excellent in all assessed themes or key questions, 2014 to 2022

Year	All assessed key questions Good, Very Good or Excellent		All assessed key questions Very Good or Excellent	
	Childminding	Daycare of Children	Childminding	Daycare of Children
2014	91.0%	90.3%	49.6%	42.2%
2015	91.8%	88.4%	48.8%	41.5%
2016	91.8%	87.6%	48.7%	40.3%
2017	92.1%	88.3%	47.6%	37.8%
2018	91.9%	88.0%	45.2%	35.7%
2019	91.7%	87.7%	44.0%	33.7%
2020	92.6%	88.7%	44.2%	33.0%
2021	92.8%	87.7%	43.9%	31.7%
2022	92.0%	88.5%	41.7%	31.5%

Figure 9: Number of ELC services broken down by the quality evaluation held at 31 December 2022

High level service type	Any evaluations Adequate, Weak or Unsatisfactory (grades 1,2 or 3)		All evaluations Good, Very Good or Excellent (grades 4,5 or 6)		All evaluations Very Good or Excellent (grades 5 or 6)	
	Number of services	% of services	Number of services	% of services	Number of services	% of services
Childminding	257	8.0%	2,953	92.0%	1,339	41.7%
Daycare of children services	384	11.5%	2,962	88.5%	1,055	31.5%
Daycare of children by main type of service:						
Children and Family Centre	5	4.9%	98	95.1%	55	53.4%
Creche	7	23.3%	23	76.7%	6	20.0%
Holiday Playscheme	5	17.2%	24	82.8%	9	31.0%
Nursery	257	10.5%	2183	89.5%	830	34.0%
Out of school care	91	14.5%	538	85.5%	132	21.0%
Playgroup	19	16.5%	96	83.5%	23	20.0%

Although most early learning and childcare services operate at a high standard across all sectors, a larger proportion of public sector services were of a high quality (holding evaluations of good or better in all assessed themes or key questions) compared to other sectors. With the exception of holiday playscheme where 100% of services in the private and public sector sectors held evaluations of good or better across all assessed themes or key questions at 31 December 2022 (Figures 10 and 11).

Figure 10: Percentage of services holding evaluations of good, very good or excellent in all assessed themes or key questions, by sector at 31 December 2022

High level service type	Public Sector		Private		Voluntary or Not for Profit	
	Number of services	% of services	Number of services	% of services	Number of services	% of services
Childminding	-	-	2,953	92.0%	-	-
Daycare of children services	1,618	54.6%	770	26.0%	574	19.4%
Daycare of children by main type of service:						
Children and Family Centre	70	95.9%	-	-	28	93.3%
Creche	7	87.5%	6	75.0%	10	71.4%
Holiday Playscheme	8	100.0%	2	100.0%	14	73.7%
Nursery	1447	93.5%	561	80.3%	175	90.7%
Out of school care	84	87.5%	195	85.5%	259	84.9%
Playgroup	2	100.0%	6	66.7%	88	84.6%

Figure 11: Percentage of services holding evaluations of very good or excellent in all assessed themes or key questions, by sector at 31 December 2022

High level service type	Public Sector		Private		Voluntary or Not for Profit	
	Number of services	% of services	Number of services	% of services	Number of services	% of services
Childminding	-	-	1,339	41.7%	-	-
Daycare of children services	685	64.9%	197	18.7%	173	16.4%
Daycare of children by main type of service:						
Children and Family Centre	42	57.5%	-	-	13	43.3%
Creche	1	12.5%	2	25.0%	3	21.4%
Holiday Playscheme	4	50.0%	-	-	5	26.3%
Nursery	620	40.1%	145	20.7%	65	33.7%
Out of school care	18	18.8%	48	21.1%	66	21.6%
Playgroup	-	-	2	22.2%	21	20.2%

Services where improvement is needed

Early learning and childcare services where all quality evaluations held were weak or unsatisfactory continue to be rare, although the number of such services increased overall from 18 (0.3% of all ELC services) in 2021 to 29 (0.4%) in 2022. Figure 12 below shows the number and percentage of services where improvement is needed.

In addition to these services, there are some services that have evaluations of adequate or poorer but also have one or more evaluations of good or better. Around one in ten nurseries and one in thirteen childminding services were adequate or poorer in at least one assessed key question at 31 December 2022, and of the 33 creches registered with the Care Inspectorate, 30 had grades at 31 December 2022, of which seven (23.3%) had at least one quality evaluation at adequate or poorer.

Figure 12: Number and percentage of services holding evaluations of weak or unsatisfactory in all assessed key questions by main service type, at 31 December 2021 and 2022

High level service type	2021		2022	
	Number of services	% of services	Number of services	% of services
Childminding	3	0.1%	6	0.2%
Daycare of children services	15	0.4%	23	0.7%
Daycare of children by main type of service:				
Children and Family Centre	0	0.0%	1	1.0%
Creche	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Holiday Playscheme	1	3.8%	0	0.0%
Nursery	8	0.3%	16	0.7%
Out of school care	5	0.8%	6	1.0%
Playgroup	1	0.8%	0	0.0%
All service types	18	0.3%	29	0.4%

4. 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 2021, the entitlement increased to 1,140 hours per year for each child.

Most funded places are offered through nurseries. In addition, the public sector can offer funded places through other services like playgroups or childminding. The proportion of nurseries offering funded places in 2022 was similar to that in 2021, whilst for playgroups and children and family centres there was an increase of 1-2 percentage points. The proportion of services providing funded places between 2014 and 2022 is presented in Figure 13 below.

Figure 13: Proportion of children and family centres, nurseries and playgroups providing funded early learning and childcare on 31 December 2014-2022

High level service type	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Children and Family Centre	76.0%	84.0%	72.0%	75.5%	84.6%	86.3%	86.6%	88.8%	89.8%
Nursery	92.0%	92.6%	93.9%	94.1%	94.5%	96.1%	97.5%	98.0%	97.5%
Playgroup	69.0%	72.0%	75.4%	74.9%	75.7%	75.6%	78.7%	75.0%	76.7%

In 2022, 48.5% of ELC services offering funded places provided these for children aged 3 years and older only, a decrease from 51.9% in 2021. A further 49.8% of ELC services offered funded places for 2-year-olds in addition to children aged 3 or older, which is an increase from 46.8% in 2021. Only 1.7% of services offering funded places do so exclusively for 2-year-olds (Figure 14).

In 2022, 49.1% of nurseries offered funded places for 2-year-olds. This is an increase from 45.6% in 2021.

Figure 14: Proportion of children and family centres, nurseries and playgroups offering funded places by age groups as at December 2022

High level service type	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	
	Number of services	% of funded services	Number of services	% of funded services	Number of services	% of funded services
Children and Family Centre	9	9.3%	83	85.6%	5	5.2%
Nursery	27	1.1%	1,189	48.0%	1259	50.9%
Playgroup	8	8.7%	55	59.8%	29	31.5%
Total	44	1.7%	1,327	49.8%	1,293	48.5%

Quality of services offering funded places

A snapshot of evaluations at 31 December 2022 shows that in 90.1% of nursery, children and family centre and playgroup services offering funded places, the quality was good or better in all assessed themes or key questions compared to 68.6% of services delivering the same type of provision but not offering funded places.

For nursery services that offered funded places, 90.0% of services overall held evaluations of good or better in all assessed themes or key questions. Of those that did not offer funded places 62.7% held evaluations of good or better in all assessed key questions.

Figure 15 below shows the comparison by sector between nurseries offering funded places and those that did not.

Figure 15: Quality evaluations of nursery services by sector and ELC funded places

Nursery offers funded places?	Sector	Any quality evaluations of adequate or lower		All quality evaluations good or better	
		Number of services	% of services	Number of services	% of services
No	Public sector*	0	-	0	-
	Private	16	42.1%	22	57.9%
	Voluntary or Not for Profit	3	23.1%	10	76.9%
	Total	19	37.3%	32	62.7%
Yes	Public sector	101	6.5%	1447	93.5%
	Private	122	18.5%	539	81.5%
	Voluntary or Not for Profit	15	8.3%	165	91.7%
	Total	238	10.0%	2151	90.0%
Total		257	10.5%	2183	89.5%

* note: all public sector nurseries provide funded places

Quality evaluations between 2014 and 2022

Since 2014, around nine out of ten funded services have been found to be good or better in all key questions although the percentage has fallen by 3.1 percentage points over time from 93.2% in 2014 to 90.1% in 2022.

At 31 December 2022, 34.6% of funded services held evaluations of very good or excellent in all assessed themes or key questions, a drop of 14.5 percentage points since 2014.

Figure 16: Proportion of daycare of children services offering funded places holding evaluations of good or better and very good or excellent in all assessed themes or key questions on the 31 December, 2014 to 2022

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
% of services found to be good or better in all assessed key questions	93.2%	91.9%	91.4%	91.0%	90.6%	90.2%	90.8%	89.4%	90.1%
% of services found to be very good or excellent in all assessed key questions	49.1%	48.1%	45.8%	42.7%	40.5%	38.1%	36.9%	34.9%	34.6%

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

There is little variation in the quality of daycare of children services across different levels of deprivation, showing that a consistent level of good quality funded provision is available in all areas (Figure 17).

Figure 17: Quality of funded daycare of children services by SIMD quintile

SIMD 2020 Quintile	Any quality evaluations of adequate or lower		All quality evaluations good or better	
	Number of services	% of services	Number of services	% of services
1 (most deprived)	40	8.2%	446	91.8%
2	55	10.1%	487	89.9%
3	69	11.1%	553	88.9%
4	48	8.6%	509	91.4%
5 (least deprived)	44	11.7%	333	88.3%
Total	256	9.9%	2,328	90.1%

When looking at the services that held grades of good or better in all assessed themes or key questions by sector and deprivation levels, public sector services were consistently high, with the total proportion of these services not dipping below 90% across all deprivation levels (Figure 18).

Figure 18: Quality of funded daycare of children services by SIMD quintile and sector

SIMD 2020 Quintile	Sector	Any quality evaluations of adequate or lower		All quality evaluations good or better	
		Number of services	% of services	Number of services	% of services
1 (most deprived)	Public sector	19	5.5%	324	94.5%
	Private	17	17.7%	79	82.3%
	Voluntary or Not for Profit	4	8.5%	43	91.5%
	Total	40	8.2%	446	91.8%
2	Public sector	27	7.2%	350	92.8%
	Private	22	19.6%	90	80.4%
	Voluntary or Not for Profit	6	11.3%	47	88.7%
	Total	55	10.1%	487	89.9%
3	Public sector	32	7.6%	389	92.4%
	Private	33	23.4%	108	76.6%
	Voluntary or Not for Profit	4	6.7%	56	93.3%
	Total	69	11.1%	553	88.9%
4	Public sector	15	4.8%	298	95.2%
	Private	23	13.9%	142	86.1%
	Voluntary or Not for Profit	10	12.7%	69	87.3%
	Total	48	8.6%	509	91.4%
5 (least deprived)	Public sector	11	6.5%	157	93.5%
	Private	29	18.7%	126	81.3%
	Voluntary or Not for Profit	4	7.4%	50	92.6%
	Total	44	11.7%	333	88.3%
All services offering funded places		256	9.9%	2,328	90.1%

Quality of funded services by urban rural classification

There is variation in the prevalence of high-quality services across the urban rural categories (Figure 19).

The areas with the highest rate of funded daycare of children services holding evaluations of good or better in all assessed themes or key questions were accessible small towns, accessible rural areas and other urban areas, while the areas with the lowest proportion of high-quality funded services were remote small towns. This is consistent with the situation in 2021 before the introduction of the new inspection framework.

There was variation by sector with public sector services offering funded places generally the best performing within each urban rural category. The main exception was in other urban areas where funded services run by voluntary or not for profit providers had the highest rate of high performing services.

Figure 19: Quality of funded daycare of children services by urban rural classification

Urban-Rural category	Sector	Any quality evaluations of adequate or lower		All quality evaluations good or better	
		Number of services	% of services	Number of services	% of services
Large Urban Areas	Public sector	22	5.9%	354	94.1%
	Private	59	21.5%	215	78.5%
	Voluntary or Not for Profit	7	8.4%	76	91.6%
	Total	88	12.0%	645	88.0%
Other Urban Areas	Public sector	30	5.5%	514	94.5%
	Private	45	18.6%	197	81.4%
	Voluntary or Not for Profit	3	3.9%	74	96.1%
	Total	78	9.0%	785	91.0%
Accessible Small Towns	Public sector	4	3.1%	125	96.9%
	Private	4	7.4%	50	92.6%
	Voluntary or Not for Profit	6	17.1%	29	82.9%
	Total	14	6.4%	204	93.6%
Remote Small Towns	Public sector	6	10.7%	50	89.3%
	Private	2	10.5%	17	89.5%
	Voluntary or Not for Profit	6	30.0%	14	70.0%
	Total	14	14.7%	81	85.3%
Accessible Rural	Public sector	16	6.3%	240	93.8%
	Private	9	14.1%	55	85.9%
	Voluntary or Not for Profit	3	6.4%	44	93.6%
	Total	28	7.6%	339	92.4%
Remote Rural	Public sector	26	10.0%	235	90.0%
	Private	5	31.3%	11	68.8%
	Voluntary or Not for Profit	3	9.7%	28	90.3%
	Total	34	11.0%	274	89.0%
Total		256	9.9%	2,328	90.1%

Childminding services offering funded early learning and childcare places

This is the third year that we have collected data from childminding services on the provision of funded places. The information below is based on the data collected from the 2020, 2021 and 2022 annual returns. Where data is unavailable (i.e. non-submissions) we impute data from a previous year.

At 31 December 2022, there were 1,220 childminding services approved to provide funded ELC places in Scotland (Figure 20). Of these, 808 (66.2%) were delivering funded places at 31 December 2022 (Figure 21).

The proportion of childminding services approved to deliver funded ELC has increased from 33% in 2021 to 34.6% in 2022. This increase in proportion was mostly because of the childminding services that cancelled in 2022, of which 89% were not approved to deliver funded ELC.

At 31 December 2022, there were 2,037 childminding services not approved to deliver funded ELC. Most of these said they had chosen not to apply to become a funded provider (76.7%) and around a sixth (15.5%) said that they had not applied but would consider doing so in the future (Figure 22).

Figure 20: Breakdown of childminding services and the type of funding provision offered at 31 December 2022

Funding Provision	Number of Services	% of total
Approved for funding	1,220	34.6%
Not approved for funding	2,037	57.7%
Not Specified	273	7.7%
Total Services	3,530	

Figure 21: Childminding services approved to deliver funded ELC places at the 31 December

	2020	2021	2022
Number of childminding services approved to deliver funded ELC places	1316	1319	1220
% of childminding services that were approved to deliver funded ELC	29.9%	33.0%	34.6%
Number of childminding services currently delivering funded ELC places	851	837	808
% of all registered childminding services that were delivering funded places	19.4%	20.9%	22.9%
% of childminding services approved to deliver that were delivering funded places	64.6%	63.5%	66.2%

Figure 22: Childminding services not approved to deliver funded ELC places, at 31 December 2020-2022

Reason for no funding	2020	2021	2022
I have applied but was not successful in my application to become a funded ELC provider	19 (0.8%)	22 (1.0%)	10 (0.5%)
I have not applied to become a funded ELC provider	1619 (69.5%)	1740 (76.0%)	1562 (76.7%)
I have not applied to become a funded ELC provider but would consider applying in the future	575 (24.7%)	449 (19.6%)	315 (15.5%)
I was in the process of applying to become a funded ELC provider	115 (4.9%)	79 (3.4%)	38 (1.9%)
No answer provided			112 (5.5%)
Total	2,328	2,290	2,037

5. Service Provision

Provision for different age groups

Childminding services, children and family centres and nursery services continued to be the main service types that offer places for children under 2 years old.

Childminding services typically cared for the widest range of age groups. Around four in every five childminding services (79.9%) offered a service for children of all ages between 2 and 11 years old and 58.9% of childminding services also offered a service for children aged 12 and over.

Children and family centres focussed 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 4-and-older and 5-and-older respectively.

Nursery provision for different age groups varied depending on sector.

- Most private nurseries (82.8%) offered a service for babies aged under 1, with around a third (29.0%) of voluntary or not for profit nurseries and 4.8% of public sector nurseries offering the same.
- Public sector nurseries mainly provided a service for children aged from 2 to 5 years, with a focus on children aged 3 and 4 years. Voluntary or not for profit nurseries were similar though a third of these nurseries also offered services to children under 1 and 1-year-olds.

For further detailed information, please see tables 6a - 6b in the Supporting Tables spreadsheet in the provision tab.

Languages and service philosophies

The majority (98.4%) of childminding services provided a service in English only. In 0.6% of childminding services, the service was delivered using either a mix of English and Gaelic or in Gaelic only (Gaelic only in two services). 1.4% of childminding services could offer British Sign Language and 3.3% could deliver the service in another language, most commonly Polish, French, Arabic or German and Makaton.

The rates of services using languages other than English was higher in daycare services than in childminding services: 2.2% (77 services) of daycare of children services delivered their service in a combination of English and Gaelic or only in Gaelic (Gaelic only in 27 services) and 6.8% (238 services) could provide the service in another language. The provision of languages other than English in daycare of children services was similar to 2021.

An outdoor-based service is one that describes itself as a specialist outdoor service and where children spend the majority of time outdoors. On 31 December 2022, 1.6% of nurseries (40 services) told us that they used an outdoor-based approach to provide the service. One holiday playscheme (3.0%) and three out of school clubs (0.4%) also offer this provision.

In daycare of children services, 2.2% (76 services) followed a Suzuki/Montessori philosophy, an increase from 1.8% last year. A further 0.8% (27 services) followed a Steiner philosophy, the same as last year.

For further detailed information, please see tables 7 in the supporting tables spreadsheet in the provision tab.

Extended day and school holiday availability

The number of services offering longer opening times to cover breakfast and after-school hours has decreased compared to 2021.

Overall, 73.3% of early years services offered care before school hours and 81.6% offered care after school hours.

44.5% of public sector nurseries provided an early morning service. This is lower than the rate in private nurseries (87.4%), however, the early morning provision in public sector nurseries has increased 1.0% compared to 2021 (an increase from 690 services in 2021 to 709 in 2022).

The rate of childminding services offering early morning provision was 92.4% this year, a similar level to 2021 (92.5%).

The rate of out of school care providing an early morning provision was 50.4%, a decrease from 51.3% in 2021.

Overall, 81.6% of services provided care after school hours, a decrease compared to 82.7% in 2021.

Almost all childminding services (96.5%) offered their service after school hours. For further detailed information, please see tables 8a in the supporting tables spreadsheet in the provision tab.

During school holidays

Nurseries and playgroups had the lowest proportion of services that operated during the school holidays, 53.2% and 5.0% respectively. For nurseries this was influenced by low rates in public sector nurseries (34.4%). In contrast most privately operated nurseries (95.1%) provided a service during the school holidays. For playgroups in

all sectors the rates were low.

Holiday playschemes (100%), children and family centres (96.3%), childminding services (93.4%) and creches (81.8%) had the highest levels of provision during the school holiday periods.

For further detailed information, please see tables 8a in the supporting tables spreadsheet in the provision tab.

Whole-day and part-day sessions

The proportion of daycare of children services that offer whole-day sessions has been increasing year on year. In 2022 this trend continued with an increase in the proportion of services offering whole-day places compared to previous years and a decrease in the number of services offering part-day places only.

At 31 December 2022, 86.6% of daycare services overall and 96.6% of nurseries offered whole-day sessions or the choice of whole or part-day sessions.

Figure 23 shows the percentage of services offering whole and part-day sessions between 2014 and 2022.

Figure 23- Sessions available between 2014 and 2022 in daycare of children services or nursery services

23a- All daycare of children services

Year	Whole-day only	Whole-day and part-day sessions offered	Part-day only
2014	3.0%	45.7%	50.8%
2015	3.1%	47.7%	48.6%
2016	3.2%	51.4%	44.5%
2017	3.5%	54.7%	40.8%
2018	4.4%	58.3%	37.3%
2019	6.2%	64.1%	29.7%
2020	16.0%	63.4%	20.6%
2021	19.8%	65.0%	15.2%
2022	20.5%	66.2%	13.4%

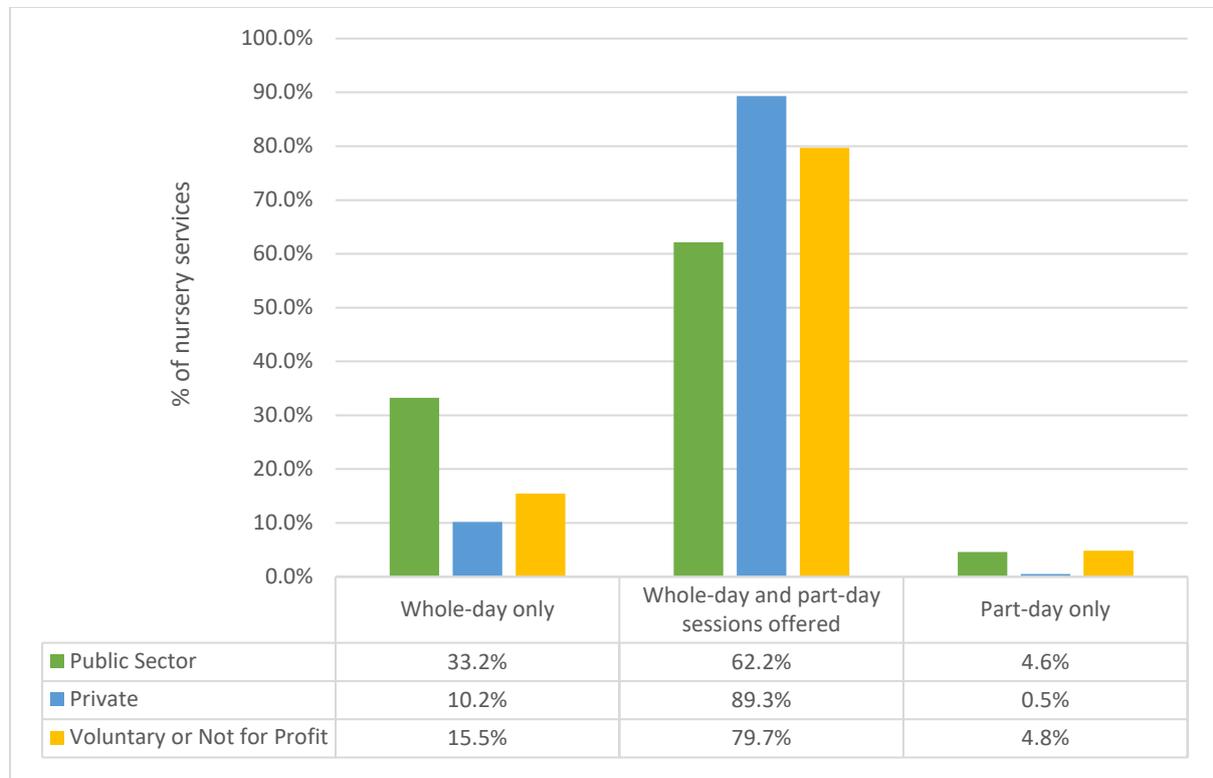
23b- Only nursery services

Year	Whole-day only	Whole-day and part-day sessions offered	Part-day only
2014	1.4%	46.4%	51.7%
2015	1.6%	49.5%	48.9%
2016	1.6%	54.3%	43.8%
2017	2.4%	58.6%	39.2%
2018	3.7%	63.8%	32.5%
2019	6.4%	71.9%	21.7%
2020	19.8%	69.2%	11.0%
2021	24.2%	71.0%	4.8%
2022	25.1%	71.5%	3.4%

The sessions offered in nurseries varied depending on the sector providing the service (Figure 24).

Almost all private nurseries (99.5%) and the majority of public-sector nurseries (95.4%) offered whole day only or a choice of part days or whole days (an increase compared to 98.9% and 93.6% in 2021, respectively).

Figure 24: Sessions available in nurseries by sector, on 31 December 2022



Some services also offer flexible sessions in addition to the full or part day provision.

In 2022, there was a decrease in the number of nurseries that provide shorter flexible sessions along with full or part day provision, with some variation by sector. In 2022, 25.6% of all nursery services offered flexible sessions (compared to 24.1% in 2021), as did 26.7% of private nurseries (27.2% in 2021) and 24.1% of public sector nurseries (22.1% in 2021).

For further detailed information, please see tables 9a – 9b in the supporting tables spreadsheet in the provision tab.

Provision of meals and snacks

Most childminding services (92.1%) continued to provide meals in their service (up from 91.6% in 2021). The meals were provided by the service only (19.9%), by the parents only (48.6%) or by both (23.6%). Almost all childminding services (99.2%) provided snacks for the children in the services, matching the rate in 2021.

Around 80% of daycare of children services provided meals in the service (whether by the service only, by parents only or both). This is a continued increase compared to the 79% reported in 2021.

In 71.9% of private nurseries where meals were served, the meals were provided solely by the service. In public sector nurseries, provision was split between service only provision (51.8%) and food provided by both the service and by parents (45.5%).

For 97.9% of public nurseries 97.9% serve meals (whether supplied by the service, parents or both), this is up from 96.5% in 2021. For private nurseries this proportion is 99.7%, similar to the proportion in 2021. For voluntary/not for profit nurseries this proportion is 98.6% which is up from 97.2% in 2021.

Almost all daycare of children services (99.5%) provided snacks for the children.

For further detailed information, please see tables 10a – 10b in the supporting tables spreadsheet in the provision tab.

Appendix 1: Definitions and what's covered in this report

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 childminding services registered with the Care Inspectorate on 31 December 2022, 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 2022. 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 childminding service 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 or part-week 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 a snapshot of grading data on 31 December 2022.
- Information on the number of services providing funded places under the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 on 31 December 2022.
- This year we have not included statistics on complaints to do with childminding services and day care of children services in this report. Statistics on complaints can instead be found in our published [complaints report](#).

A **childminding service** 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 childminding services must be registered with the Care Inspectorate. The services is usually provided from the childminding's home for a small number of children and often includes the childminding'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 another registered childminder.
- A childminding service may have paid or unpaid assistants to help provide the 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, family centres, 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 the public sector. 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 to enable adults to engage in activities such as education or training, 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 public sector 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 provided.

Out of school care (also referred to as out of school club)

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 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 care services 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) is provided.

Playgroup

Mostly voluntary sector services run by a parents committee, often with parents taking part in a rota to assist paid staff.

Sector provider types in early learning and childcare services

Public sector 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 services operate 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, Scottish Government have significantly increased the amount of early learning and childcare provided through public sector. 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 public sector implemented this increase during 2020, meaning that some children received increased funded hours before 2021).

Other types of funding for children to attend early learning and childcare services can be made by public sector. However, most funding of the 1140 hours 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'.

Appendix 2: 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 childminding registered with the Care Inspectorate on 31 December 2022. 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 provision. 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 provision 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 2021 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 2022 to 31 December 2022) and the Care Inspectorate service list (as on 31 December 2022). Figures relating to previous years are taken from our reports on early learning and childcare statistics publications for 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021.

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 2022 did not have to submit an annual return for December 2022, we encouraged them to do so.

Of the 7,044 childcare services registered with the Care Inspectorate on 31 December 2022, 6,003 (85.2%) submitted an annual return, lower than 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 3: Data sources

The Care Inspectorate service list (on 31 December 2022) has been used to provide figures on:

- the total number of registered daycare of children and childminding 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 public sector, deprivation category and urban-rural category of the service.

We have used Care Inspectorate annual returns (on 31 December 2022) 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
- whether childminding and daycare of children services provided funded places
- the number of children registered with out of school care services
- 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.

The 2020 Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) has been used to identify 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-2020/>

The National Records of Scotland mid-year population estimates (mid 2021) 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>

Appendix 4: Data cleaning and dealing with missing data

Data input errors or incomplete responses identified in relation to specific questions have been corrected where possible before any analysis has taken place. Not all childcare services 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 2022

High level service type	Number of services who submitted annual return	Response rate
Childminding	2,682	76.0%
Children and Family Centre	107	99.1%
Creche	23	69.7%
Holiday Playscheme	29	87.9%
Nursery	2,430	95.7%
Out of school care	619	90.8%
Playgroup	113	94.2%
Daycare of children services	3,321	94.5%
Total	6,003	85.2%

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 2022, but submitted a return for either 2021 or 2020, the information submitted in the most recent historic annual return was used to impute the missing data for 2022. Where a service re-registered (for example, due to a change in ownership or service provider) and information was missing for 2022, the most recent historic information from the previously registered service was used. For childminding the information from previous annual returns was 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 2021 or 2020 (or 2019 for childminding), or where a service was newly registered in 2022 (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 (public sector area and level of deprivation) and service category (nursery, playgroup etc.). We estimated the missing data using average values from services based on the above criteria.

Appendix 5: Changes to data items collected in 2022

There were no changes in the questions asked in the December 2022 annual return compared to December 2021.

Appendix 6: How the Care Inspectorate assesses quality during inspection

During inspections, we assessed quality themes and now key questions, which cover the main areas of a service's work. How well the service performed in these areas indicated how good the service is.

Quality themes – Framework used up to June 2022

- 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

Key questions – Framework used from June 2022

- How good is our care, play and learning?
- How good is our setting?
- How good is our leadership?
- How good is our staff team?

Each key question is evaluated using a six-point scale.

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

1 – Unsatisfactory

Matching new key question framework to the old quality theme framework

New key questions	Previous quality themes
1: How good is our care, play and learning?	Quality of care and support
2: How good is our setting?	Quality of environment
3: How good is our leadership?	Quality of management and leadership
4: How good is our staff team?	Quality of staffing

For more information on the new key question inspection framework please see the link below:

<https://www.careinspectorate.com/index.php/inspections/quality-framework-for-elc-services>

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