

To: Education and Children Policy Board

On: 20 January 2022

Report by: Director of Children's Services

Heading: Early Learning and Childcare Consultation - 2021

1. Summary

- 1.1 The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 places a duty on local authorities to consult representative populations of parents and carers on how the mandatory early learning and childcare, day care, out of school care and discretionary services should be made available. There is a requirement to consult every 2 years and to publish plans in response to these consultations.
 - 1.2 This report advises on the findings of the early learning and childcare consultation carried out by Renfrewshire Council during August and September 2021. The consultation report is attached as appendix one to this report.
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2. Recommendation

- 2.1 The Education and Children's Service Policy Board is asked to note the findings of the early learning and childcare consultation - 2021, which is attached as an appendix to this report.
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3. Background

- 3.1 Part 6 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 places a duty on local authorities to consult representative populations of parents and carers on how mandatory early learning and childcare should be made available and to publish plans for future delivery in response to the consultations. Parts 7 and 8 of the Act also requires an authority to consult representative populations of parents on how discretionary early learning and childcare (under the 1980 Act) and discretionary day care and out of school care for children not in need (under the 1995 Act) should be provided and supported. There is also a requirement to consult representative

populations of parents on how mandatory day care and out of school for children in need (under the 1995 Act) should be made available.

- 3.2 There is a requirement to consult every 2 years and to publish plans in response to these consultations.
- 3.3 Previous surveys were undertaken in June 2014, August 2016 and June 2018. A survey relating specifically to early learning and childcare was also carried out in 2017. The findings from the previous surveys have provided information on demand, barriers, perceptions and future use of early learning and childcare services for parents of children aged 0-14 years and assisted the council in the planning and delivery of services. This information played a key part in planning for the expansion of early learning and childcare.
- 3.4 The findings from the survey carried out by Renfrewshire Council in June 2018 were reported to Education and Children's Services Policy Board in November 2018. This consultation was conducted via an online survey to achieve maximum engagement from parents across Renfrewshire, with the findings used to further progress the expansion plans for early learning and childcare.
- 3.5 In line with the requirement to consult every 2 years a further survey should have been carried out around summer 2020. This did not progress due to the covid pandemic.
- 3.6 An online survey of Renfrewshire parents and carers relating to early learning and childcare was carried out in August and September 2021. A total of 940 respondents took part in the Nursery and Childcare survey. Questions were set to gather information on current and future usage of early learning and childcare 0 to 14 years, demand, barriers and parental perceptions. The survey was structured to provide information within two categories: needs and services for parents of children aged birth to five years and 5 -14 years. The survey included a number of closed questions.
- 3.7 Appendix one provides the overall findings from the 2021 survey, including information on headline results and responses to all the questions asked.
- 3.8 Due to the small sample size of respondents who participated in the consultation the responses provided can only be seen as an indicator of the desires, demand and perceptions which may not fully represent the views of the wider community.

4. Key Findings – Early Learning and Childcare Survey – 2021

- 4.1 A total of 940 respondents took part in the early learning and childcare survey. An analysis of the data revealed that 45% of the respondents live in the Paisley area, 55% had children aged under 5 years and 74% had children aged between 5 and 14 years of age.
- 4.2 The key findings of the survey are as follows:
 - (i) early learning and childcare (0 to 5 years)**
 - 51% of parents local authority childcare with a further 45% using funded providers.
 - A higher percentage of respondents (52%) are using funded provider settings for children under 3, with 42% using local authority
 - Only 6% of respondents indicated that they use a registered childminder.
 - The key reasons for using early learning and childcare services are:

- 78% to support child development.
- 75% to enable parents to work.
- 60% because their child is entitled to a place.
- The key factors influencing parents in their choice of an early learning and childcare provider:
 - positive inspection grades (72%).
 - opportunity for children to socialise (72%).
 - highly qualified staff (69%).
- The preferred patterns for delivering 1140 hours of early learning and childcare are for:
 - 6 hours a day over the term time (39%).
 - 2 and a half days per week over the full year (31%).

(ii) Out of school care (school age)

- 45% use family and friends as the most common form of childcare.
- 24% had children attending before school care and 36% after school care provision.
- 96% are using a childcare services to enable parents to work.
- The key common views and perceptions on out of school care provision:
 - 70% strongly agree / agree that the support of their family and friends is required to meet childcare needs.
 - 60% of respondents strongly agree / agree that providers are in a suitable location.
 - 40% disagree / strongly disagree that out of school care is an affordable option, with 31% providing a neutral response to this question.

- 4.3 The survey responses from parents who had children from birth to not yet attending school equates to around 9% of the National Records of Scotland's population in Renfrewshire for this age group. 695 respondents had children of school age. The projected population for this age group in Renfrewshire is 19,383.
- 4.4 Due to the small sample size the responses provided can only be seen as an indicator of the desires, demand and perceptions which may not fully represent the views of the wider community.
- 4.5 Although a small sample size, the findings in relation to early learning and childcare will continue to assist the council in its delivery options of provision. The findings in relation to other aspects of childcare will be considered when undertaking any future planning of childcare services for Renfrewshire.

Implications of this report

1. Financial

None

2. HR and Organisational Development

None

3. Community /Council Planning

Our Renfrewshire is thriving

Ensuring the best start in life for children and young people.

Our Renfrewshire is well

Earlier intervention will lead to healthier outcomes for young children.

Our Renfrewshire is safe

Local services will benefit children, young people and members of the community.

Building strong, safe and resilient communities

The quality of community life is enhanced by supporting parents, children and young people.

Tackling inequality, ensuring opportunities for all

Effective governance arrangements ensure that the organisations receiving funding comply with legislative requirements.

Creating a sustainable Renfrewshire for all to enjoy

Flexible childcare placements will enable parents to access and sustain employment, training or education.

4. Legal

None

5. Property/Assets

None

6. Information Technology

None

7. Equality and Human Rights

The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report because there is no decrease to the level of funding being proposed therefore no diminution of service. Services comply with the Equality Act 2010.

8. Health and Safety

None

9. Procurement

None

10. Risk

None

11. Privacy Impact

Personal information will only be held as required in order to deliver the service. This will be done in accordance with all data protection legislation.

12. COSLA Policy Position

None

13. Climate Risk

None

List of Background Papers

(i) Early Learning and Childcare Consultation – 2018, Education and Children Policy Board, 1 November 2018.

KMcD/JC/SQ/LG
22 November 2020

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RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL
EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE
(0 TO 14 YEARS)
CONSULTATION
2021

1. Executive Summary

1.1 Introduction

The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 places a duty on local authorities to consult with parents every two years on how early learning and childcare for children aged 0 to 14 years should be made available and to publish a plan for how it intends to make early learning and childcare available. This report provides the findings of the most recent survey carried out by Renfrewshire Council during August and September 2021.

The consultation was conducted using an online survey which was promoted on the council website and social media.

1.2 Key Findings

A total of 940 respondents took part in the early learning and childcare survey. An analysis of the data revealed that 45% of the respondents live in the Paisley area, 55% had children aged under 5 years and 74% had children aged between 5 and 14 years of age.

The key findings of the survey are as follows:

(i) Early learning and childcare (0 to 5 years)

- 51% of parents local authority childcare with a further 45% using funded providers.
- A higher percentage of respondents (52%) are using funded provider settings for children under 3, with 42% using local authority.
- Only 6% of respondents indicated that they use a registered childminder.
- The key reasons for using early learning and childcare services are:
 - 78% to support child development.
 - 75% to enable parents to work.
 - 60% because their child is entitled to a place.
- The key factors influencing parents in their choice of an early learning and childcare provider:
 - positive inspection grades (72%).
 - opportunity for children to socialise (72%).
 - highly qualified staff (69%).
- The preferred patterns for delivering 1140 hours of early learning and childcare are for:
 - 6 hours a day over the term time (39%).
 - 2 and a half days per week over the full year (31%).

(ii) Out of school care (school age)

- 45% use family and friends as the most common form of childcare.
- 24% had children attending before school care and 36% after school care provision.
- 96% are using a childcare services to enable parents to work.
- The key common views and perceptions on out of school care provision:
 - 70% strongly agree / agree that the support of their family and friends is required to meet childcare needs.
 - 60% of respondents strongly agree / agree that providers are in a suitable location.
 - 40% disagree / strongly disagree that out of school care is an affordable option, with 31% providing a neutral response to this question.

2. Overall Survey Results

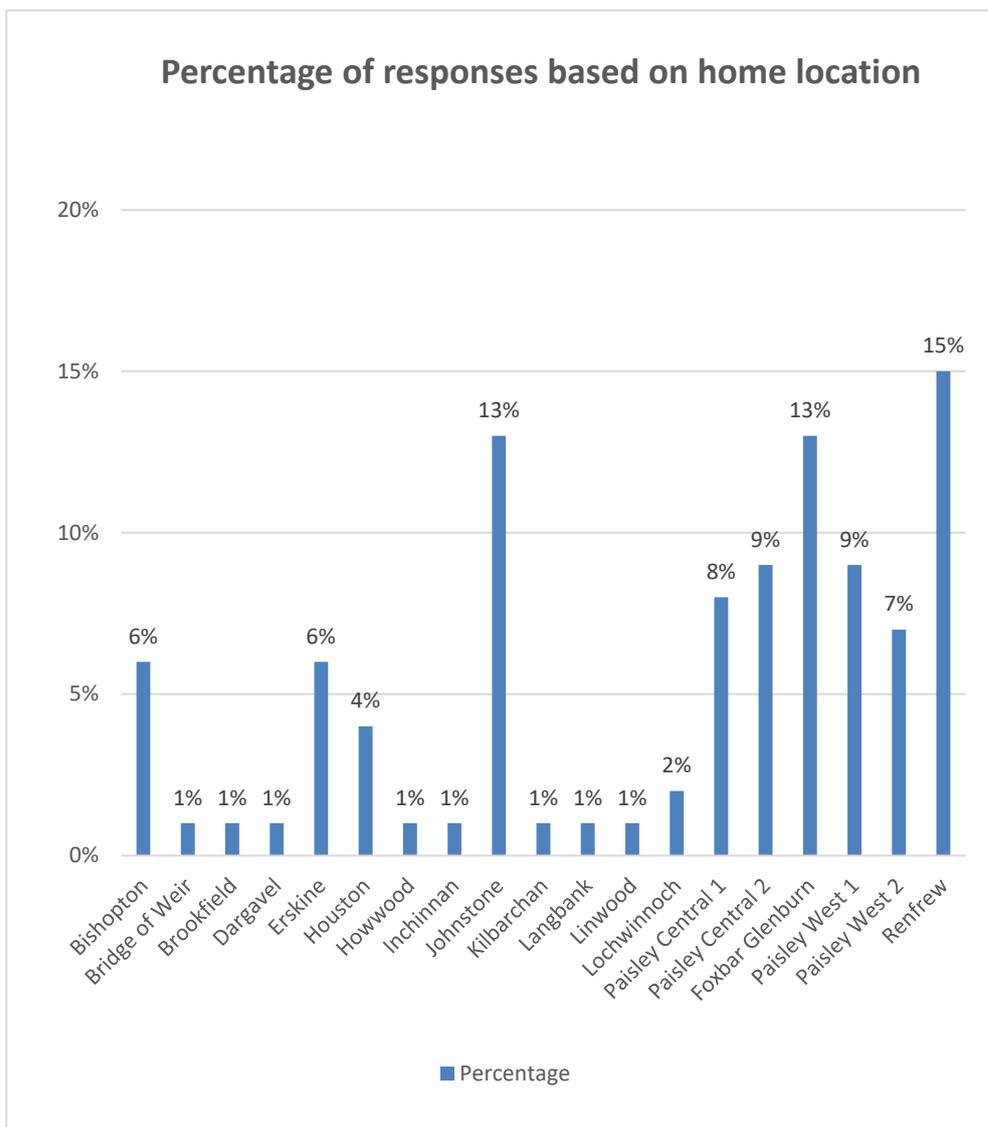
This section of the report details the responses to each of the questions of the consultation survey. Due to the small sample size across the Renfrewshire Council areas the responses provided can only be seen as an indicator of the desires, demand and perceptions which may not fully represent the views of the wider community.

The survey responses from parents who have children from birth to not yet attending school equates to around 9% of the National Records of Scotland's population in Renfrewshire for this age group. 695 respondents have children of school age. The projected population for this age group in Renfrewshire is 19,383.

2.1 Respondent Profile

2.1.1 Of the 940 respondents who took part in the survey, they represented 823 children aged 0 to 5 years. Whilst the survey did not identify the total number of school age children the findings indicate that 695 respondents have children of school age.

2.1.2 Respondents were asked to identify which areas of Renfrewshire they lived in. Whilst the findings of the survey show representation from every area of Renfrewshire the distribution of respondents is not evenly spread, with around 46% living in the Paisley area and fewer than 10 living in areas such as Brookfield, Langbank and Howwood. The chart below details the area responses:



2.2 Survey Questions Relating to Early Learning and Childcare

2.2.1 This section of the survey related children aged 0 to not yet attending school.

2.2.2 Respondents were asked to indicate the number of children in their family within the following age categories. The highest populated age group was the 3 to 5 years with over 392 children falling within this category followed by 227 in the under 2 years age group. Table one below details the responses:

Table 1: Age Category	Number
0 – Under 2 years	227
2 – under 3 years	204
3 - 5 years	392

2.2.3 Parents were asked to identify the types of childcare they currently use, with the majority of respondents (51%) identifying a local authority early learning and childcare centre or class followed by 45% using funded providers. Only 20% of respondents are

using family or friends for childcare. Further analysis of the data showed that a higher percentage of respondents (52%) are using funded provider settings for children under 3, with local authority at 42%. The tables below detail the responses:

	Number	%
Early Learning and Childcare Centre/Class – Local Authority	264	51%
Funded Providers	232	45%
Family and/or friends	105	20%
Registered Childminder	32	6%
None of the above	16	3%

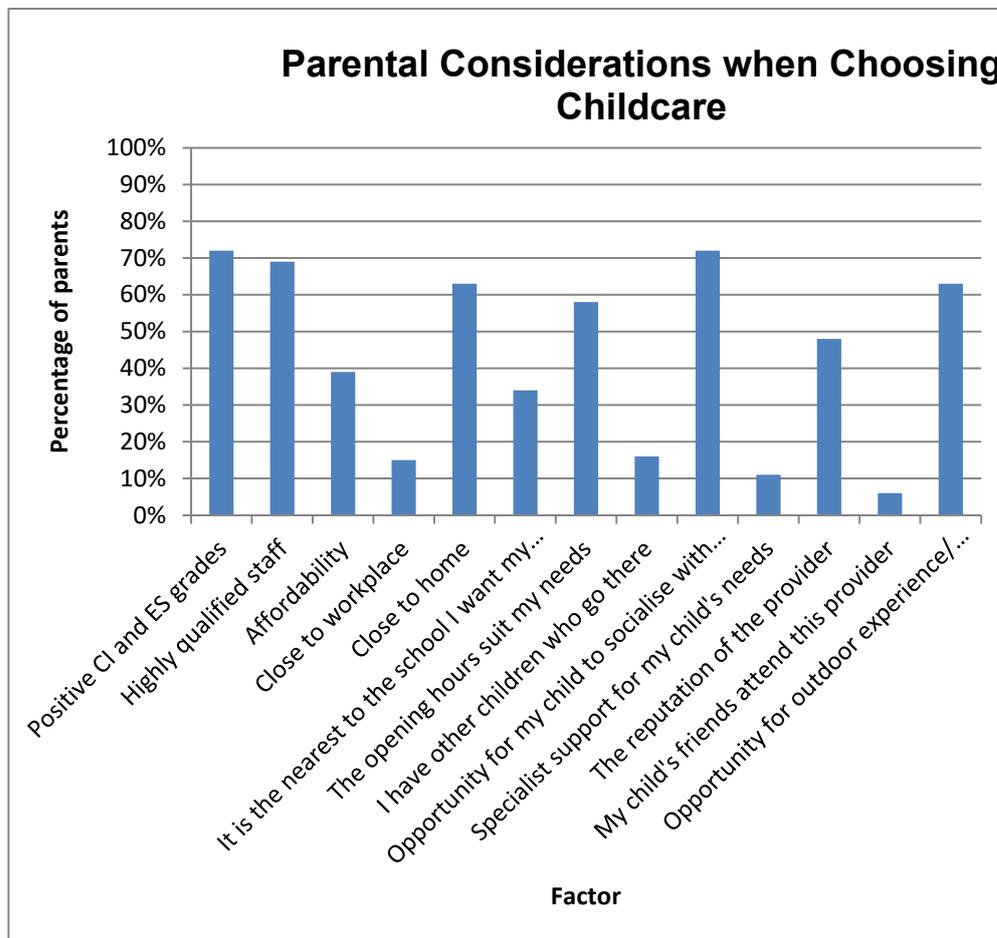
Age Group	Local Authority	Funded Provider	Family and Friends	Registered Childminders	None
0 - 2 years	41%	53%	26%	4%	4%
2 – 3 years	44%	51%	21%	7%	2%
3 - 5 years	62%	40%	20%	5%	2%

(NB: the number of responses totals to more than 100%, indicating that parents are using more than one service.)

2.2.4 Respondents were asked to indicate the factors they considered important when choosing a childcare provider. They were able to choose from a list of statements to select the factors that they considered important. Positive Care Inspectorate and Education Scotland grades and the opportunity for their child to socialise with other children were chosen by the largest number of respondents, 72% choosing these factors. A provider having highly qualified staff (69%) was the next most selected factor when considering a preferred provider. 63% of respondents choose the provider being close to home and the opportunity for outdoor experience/ learning as important factors.

While affordability was indicated as being important within all age groups, there was a slight difference across the stages, with 43% of respondents with children under 3 in comparison to 36% for the 3 to 5 age group. The table and chart below indicate the responses:

Reason	Number	%
Positive Care Inspection and Education Scotland grades	373	72%
Highly qualified staff	353	69%
Affordability	203	39%
Close to workplace	77	15%
Close to home	325	63%
It is the nearest to the school I want my child to attend	177	34%
The opening hours suit my needs	301	58%
I have other children who go there	83	16%
Opportunity for my child to socialise with other children	373	72%
Specialist support for my child's needs	59	11%
The reputation of the provider	249	48%
My child's friends attend this provider	30	6%
Opportunity for outdoor experience/ learning	325	63%



2.2.5 Respondents were also asked the reason for using early learning and childcare for their child. 78% of parents use childcare as they believe it is good for their child's development. The second most selected reason was that it allowed the parents to work, 75%. 60% of respondents indicated that it was because their child was entitled to early learning and childcare. Further examination of the data showed no significant variance between age groups in the response to this question, except the reason that my child is entitled to early learning and childcare, with 75% of respondents' children in the 3 to 5 age group compared to 43% with children aged 0 to 3 years. The tables below provide the responses from parents:

Table 5: Reasons for use of early learning and childcare	%
My child is entitled to early learning and childcare	60%
To allow me to work	75%
To allow me to look for work	4%
To allow me to study/train	7%
To give me time for the other things	14%
It is good for my child's development	78%
To support my child's ASN	6%
My child likes spending time at the provider	35%

Table 6: Reasons for use of early learning and childcare by age	0 - 2 years	2 - 3 years	3 - 5 years
My child is entitled to early learning and childcare	43%	43%	75%
Allow me to work	73%	75%	72%
Allow me to look for work	0%	5%	5%
Allow me to study/train	6%	7%	7%
To give me time for the other things	14%	12%	15%
It is good for my child's development	71%	78%	80%
To support my child's ASN	2%	7%	6%
My child likes spending time at the provider	27%	25%	39%

NB: the percentage of the ages equals more than 100% due to parents having children in different age groups.)

2.3 Survey Questions Relating to the Expansion to 1140 hours of Early Learning and Childcare

This section of the consultation survey focused on parents' views, preferences and needs relating to the increased childcare provision following the 1140 expansion.

- 2.3.1 Respondents were asked to indicate the pattern of attendance of early learning and childcare that would best suit their needs. The favoured patterns of attendance selected by respondents was school day, 39%, and two full days and one-half day, 31%.

The data concerning preferred pattern of attendance was further examined on an area basis. Table 7 provides the breakdown of responses:

Table 7: ELCC pattern of attendance	Number	%
10 hours per day	39	8%
Half days – morning	44	9%
Half days – afternoon	17	3%
School days – 9:00 – 15:00	199	39%
Two full days and one-half day	159	31%
Other	53	10%

A comparison was made between the findings of this survey on preferred patterns of attendance against the 2018 consultation. There were some differences in the response relating to the preferences for 10 hours per day, decreasing from 40% to 8% whilst 2 and a half days per week increased from 14% to 31%. It is not possible to reach an absolute conclusion to the reason for this change, however the introduction of more flexible patterns of delivery in the roll out of the 1140 expansion is a likely factor.

- 2.3.2 Parents were asked if they required to purchase additional hours in a week over the 1140 hours of free early learning and childcare to meet their needs. 47% of respondents said that they would not need to purchase any additional hours, in comparison 53% either currently purchase or believe they will need to do this in the future. Further analysis of the data in relation to this question and the geographical areas where respondents live was undertaken. The findings showed that over 50% respondents from Johnstone, Erskine, Langbank, Lochwinnoch, Paisley Central 2, Paisley West 1, Foxbar and Glenburn indicated that they would not need to pay for more hours. Tables 8 and 9 below details the response:

Table 8: Additional hours in a week required on top of 1140	Number	%
Yes, currently purchase	119	23%
Yes, in the future	154	30%
No	241	47%

Table 9: Additional hours required on top of 1140 by area			
Area	Yes, currently purchase	Yes, in the future	No
Bishopton	30%	32%	38%
Bridge of Weir	0%	50%	50%
Brookfield	50%	0%	50%
Dargavel	64%	21%	14%
Erskine	23%	23%	55%
Houston	40%	25%	35%
Howwood	0%	60%	40%
Inchinnan	17%	67%	17%
Johnstone	11%	28%	61%
Kilbarchan	50%	0%	50%
Langbank	0%	0%	100%
Linwood	29%	43%	29%
Lochwinnoch	20%	0%	80%
Paisley Central 1	25%	25%	50%
Paisley Central 2	24%	24%	53%
Foxbar Glenburn	17%	32%	51%
Paisley West 1	19%	30%	51%
Paisley West 2	23%	40%	38%
Renfrew	24%	34%	42%
Grand Total	23%	30%	47%

2.3.3 A comparison of the findings to this question was made against the 2018 survey. There was a noticeable increase in the percentage of respondents saying they would need to purchase additional hours, 53% in this survey in comparison to 32% in the 2018 survey. An increase of more than 10% was found in all but one geographical area. Since the 2018 survey the entitlement to 1140 hours of free early learning and childcare is now available to all eligible children. This seems to have likely generated the increase.

2.3.4 Parents were asked if their childcare needs changed each week to accommodate work shift patterns. Less than a quarter of parents who responded to this question said that this described their needs. There does not appear to be an obvious geographical variance in shift needs within Renfrewshire. Table 10 below illustrates the results:

Table 10: Changing childcare needs due to work shift patterns	Number	%
Yes	105	21%
No	403	79%

2.3.5 Respondents were asked where they would like their 1140 hours of early learning and childcare to be provided. The consultation found that the majority (56%) of parents preferred to have all their early learning and childcare provided in the one local authority establishment. The data was analysed to understand parents' views within

each area across Renfrewshire. Bishopton and Dargavel (62% and 57% respectively) are the only areas where the majority wanted their child to attend a funded private or voluntary nursery. One observation in relation to this finding prior is that prior to this academic session was that there was no local authority establishment in this geographical area. Tables 11 and 12 details the responses:

	Number	%
All in one funded private or voluntary nursery	169	33%
All in one local authority nursery	287	56%
All with a funded registered childminder	2	0%
Shared between a nursery and a Childminder	28	5%
Shared with more than one nursery	27	5%

How would you like your hours provided?	All in one funded private or voluntary	All in one local authority nursery	All with a funded registered childminder	Shared between a nursery and a Childminder	Shared with more than one nursery
Bishopton	62%	32%	0%	4%	2%
Bridge of Weir	50%	50%	0%	0%	0%
Brookfield	25%	25%	0%	25%	25%
Dargavel	57%	29%	0%	7%	7%
Erskine	28%	58%	3%	8%	5%
Houston	40%	45%	0%	10%	5%
Howwood	20%	60%	0%	20%	0%
Inchinnan	33%	67%	0%	0%	0%
Johnstone	11%	78%	0%	6%	6%
Kilbarchan	50%	50%	0%	0%	0%
Langbank	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%
Linwood	29%	43%	0%	29%	0%
Lochwinnoch	0%	40%	0%	60%	0%
Paisley Central 1	22%	67%	0%	6%	6%
Paisley Central 2	35%	54%	0%	3%	8%
Foxbar Glenburn	22%	73%	0%	1%	4%
Paisley West 1	29%	61%	3%	3%	5%
Paisley West 2	38%	51%	0%	3%	8%
Renfrew	44%	45%	0%	5%	6%

2.3.6 Parents were asked about Gaelic as part of their early learning and childcare provision. 216 parents (42%) indicated an interest in this. This response represents 342 children which is 4% of the population of children not yet attending school in Renfrewshire.

2.3.7 In an attempt to understand parents' views and perceptions about current early learning and childcare provision respondents were asked, through a rating scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree, to respond to a range of statements about common views/perceptions. A strong majority (89%) of respondents strongly agree/agree that early learning and childcare provision is in a suitable location for them. A similarly high number (87%) of parents strongly agree/agree that their childcare provider offers a quality service. 56% of respondents said the strongly agree or agree that childcare is

flexible and caters to their needs with 68% saying that they still require support from family and friends. 43% of respondents indicated that they strongly agree or agree that early learning and childcare is now more affordable.

2.3.8 An analysis of the responses against each of the age groups of children were consistent other than the question relating to affordability. 47% of parents with children aged 3 to 5 years agreed that childcare was more affordable, whereas 43% of respondents with children under 3 years of age disagreed / strongly disagreed with this. Whilst it is not possible to draw a firm conclusion to the reasons for this variance in view, one possible explanation could be the universal entitlement to 1140 hours of early learning and childcare for all 3- to 5-year-olds, whereas only 27% of 2 years olds are entitled, with no entitlement for children under 2 years. The response to this question is detained in table 13 below:

Table 13: Views/perceptions of current early learning and childcare	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Early Learning and Childcare is now a more affordable option.	20%	23%	22%	21%	14%
Early Learning and Childcare is flexible and caters for my needs.	17%	39%	21%	17%	6%
I require support from my family and friends for childcare.	41%	27%	13%	12%	7%
Early Learning and Childcare is in a suitable location for me.	52%	37%	7%	3%	1%
Early Learning and Childcare provision I receive provides a quality service for my child and my family.	49%	38%	9%	3%	1%

2.4 Survey Questions Relating to Before and After School Care

2.4.1 This section of the survey related to children school age children (5 to 14 years), focusing on parents' views and needs regarding before and after school care provision.

2.4.2 Respondents were asked about the type of childcare they used for their children. The most popular response to this question was the use of family or friends, with 45% of respondents using this form of childcare. 36% of respondents use after school care with 24% using childcare before school. The least utilised type of childcare was a registered childminder (6%). The responses are detailed in the table below:

Table 14: Types of Childcare Used	Number	%
Family and Friends	309	45%
After School	250	36%
Before School	165	24%
School Holidays	162	23%
Childminders	44	6%
None	177	26%

2.4.3 There was a comparison of the data of the responses from this survey against the 2018 consultation. The percentage responses remain reasonably stable between the 2 surveys other than the question about after school care, which increased from 27% to 36%.

2.4.4 Parents were asked for their reasons for using out of school care. The most popular response was that it allowed them to work, with 96% of parents using out of school care choosing these options. Table 15 details the responses to this question:

Table 15 - Reasons for using out of school care	Number	%
To allow me to work	370	96%
To allow me to look for work	3	1%
To allow me to study/train	27	4%
To give me time for other things (e.g. appointments, housework, socialising etc.)	15	7%
It is good for my child's development (e.g. social interaction)	65	17%
My child likes spending time with/at the provider	53	14%

(NB: respondents could select multiple option choices).

2.4.5 A question on the future use of out of school care was asked. 76% of respondents said they would use the service in future. 15% of respondents said they would not and a further 9% saying that it would not be applicable for them. There was a very low return rate in the 2 geographical areas (Howwood 8 responses and Kilbarchan 9 responses) which showed a variance from the results noted below:

Table 16: Use of OSC services in future	Number	%
Yes	527	76%
No	102	15%
Not applicable	60	9%

2.4.6 Those who responded that they would use out of school care services in future were then asked which services they would utilise. The below table details the responses:

Table 17: Future service use	%
After School	88%
Before School	60%
School Holidays	58%
Childminders	7%

2.4.7 Parents were also asked about their perceptions and views of out of school care provision for children aged 0 to 14. A rating scale, from strongly agree to strongly disagree, was used to gather respondent views against a range of statements.

2.4.8 More than 70% of respondent strongly agree / agree that they require support of their family and friends to meet their childcare needs. 40% of respondents indicated that they disagree / strongly disagree that out of school care is an affordable option, with 31% providing a neutral response to this question. Respondents were twice as likely to strongly agree/ agree that out of school care is flexible and meets their needs than disagree / strongly disagree, with 45% and 22% respectively. 60% of respondents strongly agree / agree that providers are in a suitable location. When it comes to rating

the quality of their childcare providers 54% of respondents strongly agreed/ agreed with this statement. Table 18 provides the detail of the response to this question:

Table 18: Views on Out of School Care	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Before / After / Holiday School Care is an affordable option.	7%	23%	31%	28%	12%
Before / After / Holiday School Care is flexible and caters for my needs.	10%	35%	33%	15%	7%
I require support from my family and friends for childcare.	43%	28%	16%	9%	4%
Before / After / Holiday School Care is in a suitable location for me.	26%	34%	26%	7%	6%
Before / After / Holiday School Care provision I receive provides a quality service for my child and my family.	23%	31%	35%	5%	5%