

Childminding services decline as the ELC expansion progresses towards 2020

Tuesday 27 November, 2018

"At 31 December 2017 there were 5,426 childminding services registered in Scotland. The drop of 4.3% in the number of childminders (243 fewer services than the previous year) was in large part due to a reduction in the number of new services registering in 2017. In addition, there is an apparent upward trend in the number of childminding services cancelling their registration within the first 12 months of operation."

These are key findings in relation to the childminding sector as detailed in the latest Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) Statistics 2017 Report published today (27 November 2018) by the Care Inspectorate. It is daunting news for parents as it reduces their choices and daunting news for the childminding sector which should currently be experiencing a period of growth in readiness for 2020 and the expansion of ELC. Commenting on the findings Maggie Simpson, Chief Executive of SCMA said: "This report is dismaying and a testament to what SCMA has been clearly stating over the past couple of years. Childminding is in danger of slowly being eradicated from the ELC sector.

"It is not surprising that there are fewer childminders entering the sector when the majority of those currently in post are being excluded from working in partnership with local authorities. The report acknowledges that the total capacity in childminding services decreased while capacity in daycare of children services increased in 2017, largely due to an increase in capacity in nurseries and out of school care services. These services are being commissioned to deliver funded ELC, so their future is more secure. And for those who have successfully registered their service with the Care Inspectorate, they are now cancelling their registration within their first year of operation. Why? Possibly because they are just unable to find sustainable work.

"Once again I would urge local authorities to engage with the high-quality childminding services operating right on their doorstep to ensure this professional sector can continue to thrive towards 2020 and the expansion of ELC."

Other key findings in the report include:

- The number of children registered with childminding services increased from 33,440 in 2016 to 33,659 in 2017 (an increase of 0.7%). This is despite a decrease in the number of childminders operating compared to last year (5,426 services compared to 5,669).
- The quality of services remained high overall with 92% of childminders found to be good or better for all quality themes compared to 88% of daycare of children services. This equates to more than nine out of every ten childminders.
- In almost half of all childminders (48%) the quality was found to be of the highest standard (excellent or very good in all themes assessed).
- In around 97% of childminders, the quality of care and support and the quality of environment was found to be good or better.
- Most childminders are registered for a maximum capacity of 6 children, which is the most they can look after at any one time. Some childminders however employ assistants which may allow them to have a maximum capacity greater than 6. The average number of places per childminder increased to 6.2 in 2016 and has remained at this level in 2017, indicating an increased use of assistants in childminding services compared to pre-2016 levels.
- Of all types of early learning and childcare services, childminding services had the second highest set of evaluations behind children and family centres.

"The original and still the main aim of the Scottish Government ELC expansion plan is to make Scotland the best place to grow up and to achieve transformational change in the way ELC is delivered." added Maggie Simpson. "SCMA whole heartedly support this vision but it remains a stark reality that potentially childminders childminding will be badly damaged unless local authorities engage with their high-quality services. The report clearly shows worrying trends in the decline of childminding services and we need to ensure these stop."

[CLICK HERE](#) to read the full Early learning and childcare statistics 2017 Report that details the provision and use of registered daycare of children and childminding services in Scotland as at 31 December 2017. Published November 2018 by the Care Inspectorate.

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