



Country profile: United Kingdom

A report for the cross-European programme *Working for inclusion: the role of the early years workforce in addressing poverty and promoting social inclusion*



Children in Scotland
every child - every childhood



This report forms part of *Working for Inclusion: the role of the early years workforce in addressing poverty and promoting social inclusion*. It is a European Union-wide programme funded by the European Commission and supported by the Scottish Government.

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Introduction

This report forms part of *Working for Inclusion: the role of the early years workforce in addressing poverty and promoting social inclusion*. It is a European Union-wide programme funded by the European Commission and supported by the Scottish Government.

The programme

Working for Inclusion is examining how improving the qualifications and skills of those working with our youngest children is helping to reduce poverty and improve social inclusion. Taking place from February 2009 - January 2011, the programme encourages and facilitates discussion and debate over the role of the early years workforce. It will enable greater, more extensive and effective dialogue between local and national governments, education and qualification providers, employers, practitioners and policymakers.

Programme partners

The programme is led by Children in Scotland in partnership with:

La Bottega Di Geppetto, Italy
Nordland Research Institute, Norway
Comenius Foundation for Child Development, Poland

Research

The programme encompasses research, which offers a clear picture of early years services and their workforce across the EU and how these relate to levels of poverty and social inclusion. In addition, country profiles of Scotland and the UK¹, Poland, Norway, Italy, Slovenia, France, Denmark, Portugal, Sweden and Hungary have been produced. This data will contribute towards policy development at EU level as well as Scotland and the rest of the UK. The research is led by Professor Peter Moss and Dr John Bennett.

Study visits

Study visits in the four partner countries will address four key themes relating to poverty and social inclusion and the early years workforce. These visits will form the basis of a report on each theme, published by Children in Scotland on the project website (www.childreninscotland.org.uk/wfi), and publicised throughout member states at local and national levels.

Each partner country will provide the context for exploring particular key challenges within the early years workforce:

- Working with the child as an active agent in their own learning (Italy)
- Working with diversity, in particular ethnicity, language, disability and gender (Scotland)
- Inclusive workforce models for rural and remote areas (Norway)
- Exploring the role of the pedagogue in working in an inclusive way with children and families, across agencies and age groups (Poland).

¹ The United Kingdom has four constituent nations: England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. This report focuses on the first two, referring to Wales and Northern Ireland where there are major differences

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Glossary of key terms

Main services

Day nursery – centre for children from a few months to five years

Playgroup/preschool – centre for children from two or three years to five years, usually part-time

Nursery class – class in primary school for three or four year olds, usually part time

Reception class – first year of primary school, but may take four year olds (this term is not used in Scotland)

Children's Centre – multi-purpose service for children and families, often including early childhood education and care. In Scotland, the term 'Children's Centre' does not have the same meaning as in England; similar services are usually called Family Centres or Child and Family Centres. *Childminding* – family day care for children from a few months; may offer school-age childcare

School-age childcare – out-of-school group-based care

Main occupations

Nursery/childcare worker – worker in day nursery or school-age childcare

Teacher – worker in nursery or reception class with teaching qualification

Childminder – family day carer

Early Years Professional – newly introduced graduate worker in Children's Centres and nurseries

Other terms

Maternity leave

Paternity leave

Parental leave

The social context of early childhood

At a glance (all figures from EU sources)

Population: 61.2 million; Density: 250 inhabitants per km²; Total fertility rate: 1.85; Children in lone parent households: 25%

Part-time employed as % all employed: 42% (women), 11% (men); maternal employment: 57% (child under 3 years), 64% (child three to six years)

GDP per capita at PPP as % EU27 average: 119%; Children 'at risk of poverty': 23% (all), 39% (lone parent); Ratio of income of top 20% to income of bottom 20%: 5.4

Tax receipts as % GDP: 37.2%; public expenditure on education as % GDP: 5.03%; public expenditure on social protection as % GDP: 26.8%, of which 1.7% on family/children.

Period of leave after birth: 52 weeks of maternity leave, 2 weeks of paternity leave and 13 weeks parental leave per parent. Maternity leave paid at 90% of earnings for six weeks and at low flat rate for further 33 weeks; paternity leave paid at low flat rate; parental leave unpaid

Demographic, social and economic

The UK has a population of just over 61 million, of whom 51 million (84%) live in England, five million (8%) in Scotland, three million (5%) in Wales and 1.8 million (3%) in Northern Ireland. The overall population density for the UK is high, more than twice the EU average, reflecting very high densities in parts of the country, eg South East England and the central belt of Scotland between Glasgow and Edinburgh. However, there are large areas that are sparsely populated, for example the Highlands of Scotland. The fertility rate is above the average for the EU but still below replacement rate.

English is the mother tongue for a large part of the population. However, there are a number of other indigenous languages. Welsh is spoken by about 20% of the population in Wales; the numbers are increasing and the 2001 census reported more than 40% of five to 15-year-olds to be bilingual. The same census showed 1% of the Scottish population

spoke Gaelic, while 7% of the Northern Ireland population spoke Irish. In addition, due to migration, there are substantial minorities in parts of the country for whom English is not their first language, but there are no reliable, recent statistics on numbers or first languages.

The UK has a high level of per capita income by EU standards, about a fifth more than the EU average. But it is also above average for child poverty and income inequality, with over a fifth of children living in poverty. The UK is one of seven member states where child poverty is above average *and* the risk of children being in poverty is higher than for the overall population (SPC, 2008: 15, Table 1). The UK is ranked 24th among EU member states for child well-being, and 13th in the world on the Gender Gap Index.

Government

The UK has three main levels of government. The *UK government* has a range of powers,

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including (relevant for this report) maternity and parental leave policy, tax credit subsidies to parents for 'child care' costs and social security. Other powers are exercised in varying degrees by the *devolved governments* of Scotland, Wales and N. Ireland, Scotland through a parliament with law making powers, Wales and N. Ireland through directly elected assemblies. Education, social services and health are predominantly and to varying degrees the responsibility of these devolved administrations, but early childhood policies are divided, some being devolved, others (eg leave policy, childcare subsidies) resting with the UK government.

There is no comparable devolved government for England, which is governed by the UK Parliament. Below these levels are elected *local authorities*, which (except in Northern Ireland) administer a range of services, including education and social services (but not health): there are 150 in England, 32 in Scotland and 22 in Wales, making English local authorities on average more than twice the size of those in Scotland and Wales.

Employment of parents

UK employment levels are around the EU average for women with children under six years. Overall levels of part-time employment are above average, especially for women, with mothers having a particularly high level of part-time employment.

Tax and social expenditure

Taxation levels are slightly below the EU average, with public expenditure on education slightly above and expenditure on social protection and family and child benefits (within social protection) slightly below the EU average. Private expenditure on education, at 1.25% of GDP, is the highest in the EU.

Leave policies for young children and their families

The UK was the last of the current 27 EU member states to introduce statutory maternity and parental leave. UK maternity leave is the longest in the EU and the least well paid, available for one year but with all but six weeks either low paid or unpaid. Parental leave is the weakest in the EU, offering the legal minimum of 13 weeks per parent – but being available only in blocks of four weeks per year (ie to take the full period, a parent would need to take a block of four weeks for each of a child's first three years); it is also unpaid. Government policy has been to treat statutory parental leave as a minimal right, for employers to improve on; while most recent policy development has been focused on extending maternity leave.

An analysis of the Millennium Cohort, a large sample of children born in 2000, indicated that 81 per cent of employed mothers took Maternity leave (rates were higher in Scotland) and that 83 per cent of these mothers had returned to work by nine to ten months after the birth of the cohort baby (Dex and Ward, 2007). The extension to the period of Maternity leave in 2003 led to an increase in the length of leave taken; the proportion of mothers taking five to seven months leave rose from a third to a half and the proportion taking more than nine months increased from nine per cent to one quarter (Smeaton and Marsh, 2006). But recent analysis suggests that the amount of maternity leave taken by mothers has declined (LaValle et al, 2008). In 2007 the median duration of maternity leave was 26 weeks, in contrast to a median of 31 weeks in 2002. In addition, a substantial minority (16 per cent) took less than the statutory minimum entitlement (i.e. less than 26 weeks).

Parental leave is not used widely, at least in

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the first 17 months of a child's life; and if used, it is only taken for short periods. In 2005, 11 per cent of mothers had taken some Parental leave since the end of Maternity leave (up from eight per cent in 2002); more than half took just one week of unpaid leave, 12 per cent two weeks and a further 18 per cent three weeks or more. Eight per cent of fathers (who described themselves as entitled) had taken some Parental leave within 17 months of their child's birth, three-quarters for less than a week (Smeaton and Marsh, 2006). Parental leave, therefore, if taken appears to be used to provide occasional care, rather than more sustained parental care.

Current cultural attitudes to child-rearing

The report by Plantenga and Remery (2009) suggests that it has 'become widely acceptable and normal practice for mothers of pre-school to be employed part-time and for parents to use formal childcare on a part-time basis for three to four year-olds, regardless of whether the mother is employed or not. Opinions are more mixed concerning the desirability of full-time formal childcare, and

the use of formal childcare for children younger than three'.

Surveys of use of services confirm this picture. Use of formal services for children under three is by and large related to parental employment (the main exception being part-time attendance by some two-year-olds in playgroups), and is not seen as a necessity or even desirable if a parent is not employed. By contrast, there is universal take-up of education for three and four year olds (what Plantenga and Remery refer to as 'formal childcare on a part-time basis) and parental surveys indicate both a high level of value being placed on such provision and a high level of satisfaction. Parent surveys also indicate that school readiness in terms of capacity to access the formal curriculum is one of the key reasons they value it.

The very long period of maternity leave – up to one year after birth – also implies a policy presumption that women are primarily responsible for the care of children under 12 months of age.

Historical overview (19th century to present)

1816: Robert Owen opens nursery school for children from 18 months of age upwards, at his factory at New Lanark in **Scotland**. For most employed parents in the **UK** during 19th century, very limited childcare options, especially for under threes, mainly leaving children unattended or using some form of childminding. Childminding merges into 'institution of dame school, where as many small children as possible were crowded into a tenement or cellar'.

1816: Children were admitted from age 18 months to the New Lanark nursery.

Mid-1820s: start of development of 'infant schools', 'rigid, humourless and dreary compared to informality, gaiety and spontaneity of early Owenite schools'.

1800-1945: middle and upper-classes use nannies and nursemaids for their young children. From 1850s, some use kindergartens/nursery schools, organised on Froebel lines; kindergarten movement develops rapidly after 1870.

1870: **English** Education Act gives parents a right of admission to school for under fives and introduces compulsory primary schooling at five years; 24% of three and four year olds in infant classes in these schools, rising to 43% by 1900.

1871: first free kindergartens for working-class families, increasing to 30 in 1901.

1872: Education Act introduced compulsory schooling for children between five and 13.

1905: local education authorities permitted to withdraw right of admission for under-fives to schools they maintained; numbers drop to 23% of three and fours by 1910, 15% (1920) and 13% (1931).

1911: Macmillan sisters open day nursery school in Deptford (London), providing for physical, educational and social needs of two to eight or nine year olds. Subsequent growth of nursery schools, but only limited (by 1938, still only 108).

1914-18: expansion of day nurseries during the First World War; 174 by 1919, then numbers fall.

1918: legislation empowers local authorities to establish nursery schools, nursery classes and day nurseries. Lack of funding means limited development in interwar years.

1939-45: rapid expansion of day nurseries in Second World War, from 194 (**England** and **Wales**) in 1941 to 1,559 in 1944.

1944: **English** Education Act encouraged local authorities to provide nursery education for three and four year olds. Little effect due to resource shortages after the war.

1945: Education Act placed duty on local authorities to provide "adequate and efficient" nursery education for children aged two to five.

Government circular, at end of war, disapproves of day nursery attendance except in exceptional circumstances. Numbers of nurseries fall, many turned into nursery schools; increasingly used for children in high need.

1950s: 'period of quiet stagnation in field of pre-school provision'; public day nurseries steadily close, private childcare gradually increases, nursery education little changed. Introduction of part-time nursery education grows rapidly in 1960s, first as practical necessity, then justified on educational grounds. Growth in under-fives in reception class, first year of primary school, ie starting

Historical overview (19th century to present)

schooling early on a voluntary basis.

1960s: little government support for early years services. Start of voluntary playgroup movement, with 500 groups by 1965, rising to 15,266 by 1972.

1967: **English** government committee publishes 'Plowden Report', proposing part-time nursery education on demand for children from three years. **English** government accepts Plowden report (1972) and proposes part-time nursery education for all by 1982; not implemented though number of three and four year olds in school increases, most in reception class.

1968: Social Work Act moved responsibility for oversight of pre-school services from Health to Social Work Services Group.

1976: statutory maternity leave of 40 weeks introduced in **UK**.

1989: English Children Act confirms public funding for childcare to be targeted at children and families meeting welfare criteria; reforms regulation of private childcare services.

Late 1980s: rapid growth in private (mainly for profit) day nurseries begins, as more women resume work after maternity leave. Between 1989 and 1994, places in public nurseries in **England** fell from 28,800 to 22,300, while private places increased from 46,600 to 125,300. Development of private market in 'childcare' with government support.

1994: **English** government decides to increase part-time education for three and four year olds, using vouchers. Low income parents receive demand subsidy for childcare costs

1995: Children Act placed duty on local

authorities to provide services for children 'in need'.

1996: Local government reorganisation, unitary authorities established, several set up integrated children's services departments with more following suit later.

1997: election of **UK** Labour government, which gives policy priority to Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC).

1998: **English** Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) announces Sure Start, targeted intervention programme for children under four and families; extended from 2000 to reach more children in poverty. Universal entitlement to free part-time early education for four year olds; vouchers dropped. Responsibility for childcare in England moved from Department of Health to Department for Education and Employment. National childcare strategy set out in Green Paper. Child care tax credit, to subsidise parental costs for childcare, introduced in UK.

Devolved government introduced in **Scotland** and **Wales**.

1998: Scottish Child Care Strategy

1999: Parental leave introduced in **UK**.

1999: Scottish Parliament opened. Minister for Education and Children established.

2000: Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage introduced in **England**, covering children in nursery education and first year of primary school (three to six year olds).

2002: Scottish Commission for the Regulation of Care set up, responsible for registration of all pre-school facilities including nursery classes attached to schools.

Historical overview (19th century to present)

2003: Responsibility for a range of other children's services (including child welfare) brought into **English** Education Department; first Minister for Children. Green Paper *Every Child Matters* launches new English 'children's agenda' with emphasis on common outcomes, common knowledge and skills in children's workforce and integrated working, including development of Children's centres and Extended Schools. First 32 children's centres established in England.

2004: **English** government announces Children's Centres in each of 20% most disadvantaged wards by 2008; later target increased from 1,700 to 2,500 Children's Centres. Universal entitlement to free part-time early education for three year olds. 10 year childcare strategy published, including 3,500 Children's Centres by 2010.

2006: **English** Childcare Act places new duties on local authorities, including improving outcomes and reducing inequalities for young children and securing sufficient childcare, including by conducting 'childcare sufficiency assessments' and managing the local childcare market.

2007 – Concordat between Scottish Government and Convention of Scottish Local Authorities agreed which ends 'ring-fencing' of funds for specific purposes.

2008: Early Years Foundation Stage introduced in **England**, incorporating curriculum and standards for services for children from birth until end of first (reception) year in primary school.

2008 – SG/CoSLA joint Early Years Framework published, with ten-year timescale to achieve 'transformational change'.

In **Scotland**, publication of *Getting it right for every child*, which is to be 'the foundation for work with all children and young people' and includes '10 core components which can be applied in any setting and in any circumstance.' Publication of joint **Scottish** Government/Convention of Scottish Local Authorities Early Years Framework in December 2008, the key strategic document aimed at ensuring children have the best start in life and setting out ten key elements to achieve this goal.

Key concepts and important influences in ECEC

Key concepts and important influences

Care and education in ECEC are recognised as closely linked. There is, however, no integrative concept like 'pedagogy' or 'education in its broadest sense', and there is a continuing separate discourse around 'childcare' and 'early education', which remain conceptually and structurally separated. More broadly, across all children's services, increasing emphasis is placed on adopting a coherent and holistic approach to all work with children.

Early identification of and intervention with children in need or at risk, particularly to reduce the need for more intrusive (and expensive) services later, and to 'break the cycle' of poverty and deprivation. ECEC is seen as playing a leading role in early intervention.

Strong emphasis on normative and prescriptive standards for services and children, expressed in key concepts such as 'quality', 'learning goals' and 'outcomes'

and in influence of discipline of child development.

Markets and competition between providers, the centrality of which was recently expressed by a senior English civil servant in a public presentation when he stated that a "diverse market (is) the only game in town". 'Choice', understood as the exercise of individual preference, is another key concept.

There are no significant, widespread pedagogical influences, at least referred to in policy documents (eg no reference to past or present pedagogical thinkers and practitioners). Some individual services and practitioners are influenced by particular pedagogical approaches, eg Montessori, Reggio Emilia. The main point of reference in policy documents is to certain research studies (eg US research, EPPE in UK) and what they say about 'what works'

The structure of ECEC

England, Scotland and Wales have partially integrated systems of ECEC for children up to five years, covering governance (for all three) and regulation and curriculum (for **England**). In both **Scotland** and **Wales**, there are separate inspection regimes for 'childcare' and school-based nursery education (see below), and early years curricula only cover children from three years upwards. Apart from administrative and some regulatory integration, the ECEC system in all parts of the **UK** is split between 'childcare' and 'early education', with each part having different types of provision, access, funding and workforces. There is a strong emphasis in policy on marketisation, with competition between providers.

Compulsory school age is five, except in **Northern Ireland** where it is between four and five years (ie a child reaching the age of four years between 1 September of that year and 1 July of the following year, should begin compulsory education in September of the following year). Elsewhere children may enter primary school between four and five years old, on a voluntary basis. In all four nations of the **UK**, therefore, many children enter primary schooling before five.

Service organisation and provision

Main types of service provision

There are four main types of provision in **UK** ECEC. *Day nurseries* are centres which usually provide full day and all year provision for children under five years. *Childminders* are family day carers who usually offer similar services to day nurseries, but to a few children in the childminder's own home. Day nurseries and childminders are primarily providing for children with employed parents. *Playgroups* (which now term themselves *preschools*) usually offer part-time services for children aged two, three or four years, though

some now also offer full day provision, operating in effect as nurseries.

Finally, there is *school-based provision* mainly in the form of classes in primary schools taking three and four year olds. Some of this provision is in *nursery classes* intended for children aged three and four years before starting the first year of primary school; but four year olds are also often found in the first year – or *reception class* – of primary school (this is uncommon in Scotland). Children mostly attend nursery classes part time, ie for a morning or afternoon session; while most attend reception class for a full school day. In addition, there are a small number of maintained *nursery schools*, publicly-funded schools providing a dedicated service to three and four year olds; and also some places in private schools. In 2007, there were 450 nursery schools in **England**, 6,800 primary schools with nursery and reception classes, and 8,900 primary schools with reception but no nursery classes.

In 2007, in **England**, there were 2.5 million places for children under five years, including: 596,500 in full day care, mainly day nurseries; 248,100 in sessional services, mainly playgroups; 291,500 at childminders; 839,300 in maintained schools (though some of these will be for five year olds in reception classes); and 28,400 in nursery schools (<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/DCSF-RR047.pdf>).

In recent years, the number of places in 'sessional' services (mainly playgroups) has fallen substantially, by 39% in **England** between 2001 and 2007, probably reflecting an increasing demand for longer hours.

There has been a rapid development of Children's Centres in **England**, which are intended to be multi-purpose services "where children under five years old and their families

The structure of ECEC

can receive seamless integrated services and information, and where they can access help from multi-disciplinary teams of professionals" (Sure Start, 2005). There is great diversity in the organisation and offer of children's centres, but two main types are envisaged. The first serve the most disadvantaged areas, and should offer families access to "good quality early learning combined with full day care provision for children (minimum 10 hours a day, five days a week, 48 weeks a year); good quality teacher input to lead the development of learning within the centre; child and family health services, including antenatal services; parental outreach; family support services; a base for a childminder network; support for children and parents with additional support needs; effective links with Jobcentre Plus to support parents/carers who wish to consider training or employment" (Sure Start Unit, 2005a, p. 5). These services included, in 2007, 51,100 full day care places, 9% of the total.

But for other areas, children's centres may offer more limited services: "appropriate support and outreach services to parents/carers who have been identified as needing them; information and advice to parents/carers on a range of subjects, including local childcare, looking after babies and young children, local early years provision and education services for three and four year olds; support to childminders; drop-in sessions and other activities for children and carers at the centre; links to Jobcentre Plus services" (ibid.).

There is a universal entitlement in **England**, **Scotland** and **Wales** to free part-time early education for all three and four-year-olds. This is currently 12.5 hours per week, to be extended to 15 hours by 2010.

Providers

Day nurseries, childminders and playgroups/preschools are predominantly run by private providers; the main exception is the relatively small amount of childcare provided in **English** Children's Centres, half of which is run by local authorities. Day nurseries mainly operate as private for-profit businesses; such nurseries generated 79% of nursery income in the **UK** in 2007, with rather more than half being in nurseries run as companies and the remainder in nurseries run by 'sole traders/ partnerships'. The remaining nursery income went to non-profit providers: 11% to non-profit private providers and 10% to public sector providers (Nursery and Childcare Market News, 7/2008, p.8).

The 2008 Childcare and Early Years providers Survey in **England** provides further information and confirms the central role of the private sector, and especially businesses, as providers of childcare services. It found that two-thirds (65%) of full day care provision (ie nurseries) was privately run and a further 22% was run by non-profit organisations, leaving just 11% run by public bodies, split equally between local authorities and schools or colleges. However, much of the publicly-run provision was in Children's Centres, where two-thirds of provision was run by local authorities ([http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/DCSF-RR164\(R\).pdf](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/DCSF-RR164(R).pdf)) (Table 3.5a)

Childminders usually operate as small private businesses, while playgroups are normally run by non-profit private providers, including community, church or parent groups. The 2008 Providers Survey in England found that the voluntary sector accounted for 64% of sessional services (ie playgroups).

School-based provision is mainly provided in maintained schools, meaning schools that are

The structure of ECEC

publicly funded and locally governed.

The entitlement to 'early education' for three and four year olds can be delivered by schools, but also by day nurseries, childminders or playgroups, provided they meet certain conditions. In 2009 in England, maintained schools provided this service for 57% of children, private sector services (including private schools) for the other 43%; the figures for Scotland are similar, 56% and 44% respectively.

Taking account of all services, children under the age of three are almost entirely served by private (mostly for-profit) providers; while children over three are more likely to receive services from public sector providers, but only by a small majority.

The governance of early childhood services

National level

Governance of these services is devolved to national governments in all four parts of the **UK**. The UK government, however, has responsibility for certain relevant policy areas, in particular leave policy and subsidies paid to parents using 'childcare' services through the tax credit system.

In **England, Scotland and Wales**, responsibility for all ECEC services is integrated in education Ministries (the Department for Children, Schools and Families in England; the Education Department in Scotland; and the Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills in Wales).

Local level

Local authorities have a strategic role for developing services, but are not significant

providers. Non-school services are largely provided by the private sector, while schools are managed by local governing bodies.

System financing

Costs for a 2-year-old as % gross earnings of average production earner: 25% (Immervoll & Barber, 2005)

Non-school provision – usually referred to as 'childcare' – primarily depends on parental fees, though these are subsidised for many lower and middle-income parents by a **UK**-wide system of demand subsidy, operated through the taxation system – a tax credit for childcare costs. In addition, tax relief is given to parents who receive childcare vouchers from their employers; the first £55 a week is free from both tax and national insurance contributions (this can save basic rate taxpayers £962 a year and higher-rate taxpayers £1,195 a year or double that per family if both parents receive vouchers).

In addition, three and four year olds attending qualifying nurseries, childminders and playgroups benefit from a direct government grant paid to the provider for delivering the early education entitlement. In 2007, two-thirds of nursery income (66%) in the **UK** came from parents, with just under a fifth of these parental fee costs covered by tax credit; the remainder came from employers (24%) and government grants for providing early education (8%) (NCMN, 2008, 7, 2, 4). The 2008 Childcare and Early Years Providers Survey in **England** confirms this picture: 83% of income for 'full day care' (ie nurseries) and 96% of income for childminders came from fees, mostly from parents, though with some of this subsidised by tax credits. Sessional settings (eg playgroups), however, drew two-thirds of their income from public funding ([www.dcsf.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/D-CSF-RR164\(R\).pdf](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/D-CSF-RR164(R).pdf)) (Chart 9.1).

The structure of ECEC

It is difficult to calculate what proportion of families using formal childcare services benefit from the tax credit system. Statistics for 2007/8 show that 414,000 **UK** families received tax credit for childcare costs (of whom over a third, 147,000 were headed by a single parent), averaging £63 a week, but there is no statistic for the number of families using formal childcare services (HMRC 2009). A survey of parents in 2008 found that 14% of parents receiving Working Tax Credit (a wage supplement) also received childcare support, but again there is no figure for recipients as a proportion of all parents using formal childcare (Speight et al., 2009)

Given the high proportion of nursery income provided by parental fees, it is not surprising that the costs for a full-time place for a two year old are among the highest in Europe, second only to the Netherlands.

School-based provision for three and four year olds is free of charge, except for school meals for the minority of children who attend for a full school day, with schools being funded directly by government.

Data collection, monitoring and research

In **England**, OFSTED (the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills), the national inspection agency, regularly publishes statistics on numbers of registered places in different types of childcare services. The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) publishes annual statistics on the numbers of children receiving free early education. In addition, the DCSF funds a range of research studies. These include: regular surveys of providers, the most recent in 2008; regular surveys of parents' take-up, views and experiences of childcare since the late 1990s, the most recent being in 2008; and the Effective Provision of Pre-School Education (EPPE) project, the first major

European longitudinal study of a national sample of young children's development (intellectual and social/behavioural) from the age of three years, including the impact of attendance at ECEC provision.

For the **UK**, Her Majesty's Customs and Revenue publishes regular statistics on the numbers of families receiving childcare tax credit.

Access Levels and Strategies

Overall access levels

Attendance at formal ECEC services (EC, 2006): Birth to 3 years: 33% (5% attend 30 hours a week or more); 3-6 years: 84 (21)% attend 30 hours a week or more)
 Attendance at informal ECEC provision: birth to 3 years: 38% (8% attend 30 hours a week or more)
 Attendance rate at formal services for children under 3 years by education level of mother (2005): low education=13%; medium education=30%; high education=39%
 Attendance rate by area for children 1-6 years (2004): Highest regional rate: 61%; lowest regional rate: 52%

Using EU statistics, the **UK** has average overall attendance rates for children under and over three years of age, but well below average rates for attendance of more than 30 hours a week, ie a high proportion of children in ECEC services in the UK attend on a part-time basis, reflecting the tradition (and current entitlement) of part-time nursery education and the significant role of largely part-time playgroups in providing for two year olds. It also suggests that a substantial proportion of children attend nurseries and childminders on a part-time basis. Compared to EU statistics, national statistics for **England** show higher access to services for three and four year olds. All of this age group are entitled to 'early education', and in England in 2009 take up was 97% with a very similar proportion (96%) in Scotland.

For the **UK** as a whole, rather more children under three years use informal than formal provision, the small size of the difference largely being because of the many two-year-olds using part-time playgroups. Only a small proportion of children attend more than 30 hours a week for both formal and informal provision.

Access levels for different groups

Across the **UK**, access is far higher among three and four year olds than under three year

olds; among the former, use of at least part-time early education is almost universal. The latest (2008) survey of parents' use, views and experiences of ECEC provision in **England** shows take-up of formal childcare and early years education remained lower than average among low income families, lone parents, couple families where one or both parents were not employed, and certain ethnic minority groups; attendance was particularly low among Pakistani and Bangladeshi families, with attendance highest among white, mixed race and Indian children (Speight et al., 2009). These social differences in use of services are very clear, at a **UK** level, for children under three years attending formal services; children whose mothers have a high educational level are three times as likely to attend as those with a mother with a low educational level.

There is no information on differences in access between rural and urban areas.

Rights for Children with Additional Support Needs

Children with special needs (or, the term used in Scotland, 'additional needs') are entitled to assessment and to services being provided following assessment. For example, the official policy of the **Scottish** Government is that children with additional needs have a

Access Levels and Strategies

statutory right to multi-agency assessment and to services being provided following this assessment under the Additional Support for Learning Act (2004). Despite the Act applying to children from birth, it was often too narrowly interpreted, so was not brought into play until a child was about to enter the education system (though frequently this would mean entry to pre-school). Legislation in 2009 made much more explicit the application of the law to all pre-school children: it includes a requirement on other agencies to refer children who may be entitled to support under the Act and clarifies that the legislation is intended to give a broad interpretation to 'support for learning' ie not just confined to classroom based or curriculum associated activity.

In the 2007 survey of providers in **England**, 3% of children attending childminders and 4-5% of children attending full day or sessional day care were assessed as having a special educational need or disability, but this figure increased to 10% in schools. However as providers might be relying on their own judgement rather than a formal assessment, these figures possibly under-estimate the proportion of children with additional needs (www.dcsf.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/D-CSF-RR047.pdf).

The most recent **Scottish** statistics, for 2008, indicate that 4.4% of children receiving pre-school education did not have English as their home language and 6.2% had other additional support needs (www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2008/09/12150803/0).

Strategies to promote inclusion

There is a strong tradition in the **UK** of targeting public provision and support on children, families and areas defined as being in high need. Although there is now a

universal entitlement for part-time early education for three and four year olds, and this is used by over 95% of the age group, other ECEC policies follow this tradition. Provision of childcare is premised on parental responsibility for purchasing marketised services, but with means-tested subsidies available to lower income parents through tax credits; otherwise public funding of childcare services is restricted to supporting a small number of children defined as being in need. Legislation in **England** and **Scotland** places responsibility on local authorities to provide ECEC services for children assessed and identified as being 'in need' on welfare grounds.

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Since 1998, the **English** government has developed a major targeted early intervention strategy, starting with Sure Start, a wide-ranging programme for children under the age of four in the most disadvantaged areas of the country; and followed by the Children's Centres programme, where the most disadvantaged areas get 'full service' centres, including early childhood education and care, while other areas get more limited services. However, there has been some criticism of Children's Centres' failure to reach the most needy families: "To date, centres have been poor at reaching out to the families that require the most help. Only one third of the centres visited by the National Audit Office had proactively sought out hard to reach families" (Select Committee on Public Accounts, 38th report, 2007).

Conditions for quality improvement and assurance

Workforce

Structure and education (basic and ongoing)

Type of provision	Title of lead staff & assistant	Pre-service education required	Qualification level
Day nurseries	Nursery/childcare worker	None. Most have 2 years @ upper secondary level or equivalent work-based training	ISCED 3
Nurseries/ Children's Centres	Early Years professional	Degree + 4-12 months further training	ISCED 5
Childminding	Childminder - family day carer	None. Should attend a local authority approved childminders' pre-registration course within 6 months of commencing childminding	None
School-based	Teacher	4 years @ university	ISCED 5
	Classroom assistant	As nursery/childcare worker	

The ECEC workforce is split in all parts of the **UK**. On one side, there is a 'childcare' workforce (including playgroup workers), on the other an 'education' workforce (including teachers, nursery nurses and other support staff, whose numbers have grown rapidly in recent years).

The 2008 Providers Survey in **England** shows a substantial difference in qualification levels between the two groups. Across all early childhood settings, 13% of staff had no qualification, just under two-thirds (64%) had a qualification between levels one and three (ie up to upper secondary level), while 11%

had a level six qualification or higher (ie graduate level qualifications). But the split workforce is reflected in very different levels of qualification for 'childcare' and 'education' workers. Among the former, 34% of childminders had no qualification, 54% a level one to three qualification and just 3% had graduate-level qualifications; while for other childcare staff the proportions were 11%, 72% and 6% respectively. In school-based settings, qualification levels are much higher; 7% have no qualification, 42% level 1-3 and 39% are graduates. The graduates in these school settings represent the qualified teacher part of the workforce, while the less qualified

Conditions for quality improvement and assurance

workers are nursery nurses and other support staff
([www.dcsf.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/D-CSF-RR164\(R\).pdf](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/D-CSF-RR164(R).pdf); Table 6.1).

The government in **England** has introduced a new occupation, the Early Years Professional, a graduate level worker. Its aims is to have an EYP providing 'graduate leadership' in every full daycare setting (ie day nursery) by 2015 and in every children's centre by 2010, with two per setting in disadvantaged areas.

In **Scotland**, a degree level Childhood Practice Standard has been introduced, which like the EYP are aimed at managers of centres.

Work conditions and support

Pay, hours and other conditions in schools are determined by national collective agreements; in private sector services by service owners or self-employed childminders.

The 2008 Providers' survey shows that in **England** staff in full day care settings worked the longest average weekly hours (34) and staff in sessional settings the shortest (19), with staff in schools in between (26-30 hours). However within childcare settings, managers and supervisory staff worked longer than other childcare staff; while in schools teachers and nursery nurse assistants worked longer than other support staff.

Staff in full day care in Children's Centres earned more per hour than other childcare workers, earning an average of £10.40 per hour. Staff in sessional and full day care providers (eg playgroups and day nurseries) earned the least per hour, (£7.20 and £7.30 respectively). However these pay rates are for all staff, including managers, and the average for non-supervisory workers is considerably lower: £8, £ 6.40 and £6.20 respectively (Table 5.16a) (the national minimum wage from October 2008 was £5.73 an hour, so that front-line workers outside Children's Centres

were earning less than one pound an hour above this minimum wage).

The average hourly pay for school staff is considerably higher, between £13.30 and £13.60 an hour, with teachers earning between £18.60 and £20.80 and nursery nurses (equivalent in qualification to many nursery workers in childcare settings) earning £9.90 to £11.00. Most school workers will also be included in an occupational, final salary pension scheme; most childcare workers will have no occupational pension benefits, a major difference in conditions.

The Providers survey does not give earnings for childminders, but in a study based on 2001-5 LFS data, they earned substantially less than nursery or sessional/playgroup staff. Both studies show that workers in private sector settings earn less than those employed in the public sector.

Overall, the ECEC workforce in the **UK** is very hierarchical. A recent study of 17 'human services' occupations in the UK, based on the 2001-2005 Labour Force Survey, compared these occupations across seven variables: average hourly pay; total usual hours worked; average age; percentage with qualifications equivalent to NVQ 3 or above; percentage in the non-private sector; percentage female; percentage white. From this analysis, three clusters of occupations emerged. Cluster one occupations, including teachers, was on average better qualified and better paid than the other occupations; they worked longer hours, had a lower percentage of female and a higher percentage of white employees, and were slightly older. Cluster two, including education/teaching assistants, was intermediate on qualifications, pay, hours, age and percentage female; they were the most likely to work outside the private sector and had the lowest percentage of white employees. Cluster three, including nursery,

Conditions for quality improvement and assurance

playgroup and school-age childcare workers, family day carers and also school midday (lunchtime) assistants, had the lowest levels of qualifications and pay; they were more likely to work part-time; and were the youngest group, with the highest percentage of female employees and are the least likely to work outside of the private sector.

Workforce profile

The ECEC workforce across the **UK** is overwhelmingly female, with only 1-2% male workers across all types of provision.

The age profile of staff in **England** in the 2008 Providers' survey varies between services, being particularly young in full day care settings, ie nurseries. Here 30% of staff are under 25 years, compared with 7% in sessional care and no childminders; the proportions over 40 years are 25%, 56% and 65% respectively. Schools have a similar profile to sessional care, with around 5% under 25 and around 55% over 40 (Tables 5.9a, 5.10).

The proportion of the total ECEC workforce who had a black and minority ethnic background varied from just 6% in sessional settings (eg playgroups) and 8% in nursery and reception classes in primary schools to 13% in nursery schools and 16% in full day care settings in children's centres (Table 5.12).

Workforce recruitment and evidence of shortages

In **Scotland** there is no significant difficulty in recruiting staff, but there is a general shortage of *qualified* staff (Level 3 and above). There is no recent evidence about shortages for **England**.

Trade unions and other workforce

organisations

Workers in public sector services in the **UK**, mainly in schools, have high levels of union membership, and are mainly covered by collective agreements. However, the great majority of other early childhood workers, in the 'childcare' sector, are employed in the private sector and few (about 10% of nursery workers) are in trade unions or professional organisations. Employment conditions for these workers are mainly set by individual employers.

Other conditions of quality

National standards (including staffing, environment)

There are national standards for ECEC services in **England**. These recommend adult:child ratios of 1:3 in centre-based services for children under the age of two; 1:4 for children aged two years; and 1:8 for children aged three to seven years. The 2007 Providers' survey found 3.9 places per member of staff in full day care services, reflecting the younger age profile of children cared for in these establishments; and 4.9 for sessional providers who care for a rather older age group (www.dcsf.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/D-CSF-RR047.pdf).

For schools, the standard in classes for three and four year olds is 1:13, where there is a teacher or EYP present; a nursery class will typically include around 25 children, with two staff, one a teacher and the other often a trained nursery nurse.

National standards in England require that every senior manager working within full day care, sessional and out of schools setting should hold at least a level three qualification appropriate to the post; all *full day care*

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supervisors should also hold at least a level three qualification appropriate for the care or development of children (where not achieved, providers must set out an action plan detailing how they intend to meet this criterion and in what timescale); and at least half of all other childcare staff and half of all staff in sessional and out of school providers should hold a level two qualification appropriate for the care or development of children (where not achieved, providers should set out an action plan detailing how they intend to meet this criterion and in what timescale). There are no specific qualification requirements for childminders, who are required to undertake 'a local authority approved childminders' pre-registration course within six months of commencing childminding'.

The 2007 Providers' Survey shows that in England, across all childcare settings, 93% of senior managers held at least a level three qualification while 16 per cent held at least a level six (graduate) qualification. High proportions of supervisors were also qualified at least to level three (84 per cent), with five per cent holding at least a level six qualification. Unsurprisingly, other paid childcare staff tended to be less qualified, with two-thirds (65 per cent) holding any relevant qualification, a quarter (26 per cent) being qualified to level three or above, and just one per cent being qualified to level 6 or above (www.dcsf.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/D-CSF-RR047.pdf).

In order to operate any formal childcare or early education service, registration with the **Scottish** Commission for the Regulation of Care is required. Registration is based on compliance with the National Care Standards (www.infoscotland.com/nationalcarestandards).

Any registered childcare provision (apart from childminders) must have at least 50% of staff qualified to SVQ Level three or equivalent.

Private sector providers will frequently adhere to the minimum required level. Statistics for Scotland do not break down qualification levels by level of work (eg manager, supervisor, non-supervisory). Across the whole undifferentiated nursery workforce, 80% had a SVQ level three or higher; for playgroups, the figure was 59%.

The equivalent of Children's Centres (which may in Scotland be called Family Centres or Child & Family Centres) are required to comply with the registration requirements. In practice they are likely to have a workforce which is fully (or almost fully) qualified. As there is no real equivalent of the 'early years professional' (though work on this is in hand) the staff may come from a number of disciplines – nursery nursing, social work, play therapy for example. While school based provision in Scotland would have teacher input this may be on a part-time basis. This is particularly evident in rural areas where peripatetic teachers are common. School based nursery staff in Scotland is more likely to include nursery nurses (VQ 3) than classroom assistants who may be unqualified.

Curriculum or national framework for services

Each nation in the **UK** has developed its own curriculum for the early years.

In **England**, the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) was introduced in 2007 by the Department for Children, Schools and Families. All registered early years providers will be required to use it from September 2008. The EYFS is a comprehensive statutory framework, setting standards for development, learning and care of children from birth to five, replacing earlier and separate frameworks such as *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*, *Birth to three matters* and *National standards for under eights daycare and childminding*. The

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EYFS includes two volumes – a statutory framework and practice guidance – running to 160 pages; these set out 69 early learning goals, educational programmes for each of ‘six areas of learning and development’, and assessment arrangements. Two examples of early learning goals, which relate to early literacy and have been criticised from some quarters, are: use of phonic knowledge to write simple regular words and make phonetically plausible attempts at more complex words; and writing their own names and other things and begin to form simple sentences sometimes using punctuation.

In *Scotland*, a curriculum covering children and young people from three to 18 years – the *Curriculum for Excellence* (CfE) – was introduced in August 2009. Despite its title, the CfE is more concerned with the principles and values which underpin the design of a curriculum, and the nature of the support and experiences children should have, than with the specific inputs they should receive. It is intended to deliver “challenge and enjoyment, breadth, progression, depth, personalisation and choice, coherence and relevance”. The Scottish Government would envisage this being demonstrated in pre-school settings by opportunities to explore activities and materials, creative use of learning environments (including the outdoors), extension of skills, promotion of logical and creative thinking, and encouragement of a problem-solving approach.

For children under three years, ‘Birth to Three: supporting our youngest children’ (Learning and Teaching Scotland, a non-departmental public agency funded by the Scottish Government) informs practice. Though it is not a requirement, regulatory and inspectorial regimes would certainly consider how any centre’s programme related to this. Many local authorities have developed and issued guidance based on the ‘Birth to Three’

document for directly managed and partner-provided services.

Wales has introduced the Foundation Phase for children from three to seven years of age, ie the last two years of early education and the first three years of primary schooling. “The Foundation Phase places great emphasis on children learning by doing. Young children will be given more opportunities to gain first hand experiences through play and active involvement rather than by completing exercises in books. They will be given time to develop their speaking and listening skills and to become confident in their reading and writing abilities” (www.wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/policy_strategy_and_planning/104009-wag/foundation_phase/?lang=en). There are two key documents: a 64 page ‘Framework for Children’s Learning’, that defines seven areas of learning (including Welsh Language Development), each with an educational programme setting out what children should be taught and outcomes setting out the expected standards of children’s performance; and a 60 page guidance document supporting implementation of the framework.

Licensing and inspection

All ECEC services in **England** are registered and regularly inspected by a national agency – the Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills (OFSTED). OFSTED is also responsible for inspecting all schools and a wide range of other services for children and young people, including residential homes, adoption and fostering services, and the children and family courts advisory service. Its inspections of early childhood services apply the standards set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Its inspection reports on individual services are publicly available.

Conditions for quality improvement and assurance

In **Scotland**, regulation of early education and child care provision is undertaken by the Scottish Commission for the Regulation of Care Commission. This applies to all sectors of provision whether public, private or voluntary, and includes classes attached to primary schools. Though registration with the Commission is required in order to operate a service, it only implies that minimum acceptable standards have been achieved. Inspection visits are both pre-arranged and unannounced. A report is compiled for each inspection which sets out requirements (actions necessary for continuation of registration), recommendations (actions advisable but which would not preclude continued registration) and summarises briefly the findings of the inspectors. Because of the substantial range topics covered by the standards, key themes for each year will be identified. In 2007 the Care Commission introduced a six-point grading scale (poor through to excellent) so that facilities are graded as well as being reported on as described above. The original intention was that Care Commission inspections would take place annually. What has now been agreed is that it will be 'proportionate' so that, for example, where a service has been found to be of good quality over a significant period of time, the frequency of inspection will be reduced.

In addition, the pre-school curriculum is inspected by another government agency, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education (HMIE), but this takes place on a much less frequent basis, with schools being inspected at around six/seven yearly intervals. Where a nursery class is attached to a school their HMIE inspection will take place as part of the school inspection. Where they are not attached to a school they will be inspected with similar frequency to schools. HMIE and the Care Commission may inspect jointly; this would happen at HMIE's request if they were

undertaking an inspection where they had a particular reason to believe this was advisable.

In **Wales**, the inspection function is divided between the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales, which is responsible for childcare services; and Estyn, the Office of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education and Training in Wales, which is responsible for the inspection of schools and education in non-maintained services such as nurseries (which are therefore inspected by both CSSIW and ESTYN). Each agency operates to its own set of standards.

Quality control

In both **England** and **Scotland**, national inspection systems provide one system for monitoring the quality of ECEC services. In **Scotland**, most local authorities have internal quality assurance regimes. By and large they are based on the frameworks used by the national bodies. Internal reviews will take place much more frequently than HMIE inspections and many authorities will undertake reviews annually. Many authorities will include commissioned services and 'partner providers' in pre-school provision in this process.

Attention to children's outcomes

In **England**, ECM – the government's 'children's agenda' – defines five common outcomes for all children: be healthy; stay safe; enjoy and achieve; make a positive contribution; and achieve economic wellbeing. More specifically, the EYFS specifies 69 early learning goals, and the overall government children's policy, Every Child Matters, specifies five more general outcomes for all services and all children. The EYFS includes an assessment system: the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile. The Profile, to be

Conditions for quality improvement and assurance

completed during the academic year that a child reaches the age of five, involves assessing children on 13 scales, each divided into nine 'points', with the procedure specified in detail in a handbook running to 90 pages.

The 2006 **English** Childcare Act places new duties on 'local authorities and their NHS and Jobcentre Plus partners to work together to improve the outcomes of all children up to the age of five and reduce inequalities between them, by ensuring early childhood services are integrated to maximise access and benefits to families'.

In **Scotland**, local authorities are required to gather and collate data on pupils' attainment in reading, writing and maths in primary school at age. This is gathered through standardised testing, though in Scotland the test for each level is taken when the child is deemed ready by the teacher rather than at a fixed age or stage. The new 'Curriculum for Excellence' will bring in revised arrangements for pupil assessment, but these have not yet been published.

Getting it right for every child in Scotland also specifies outcomes for all children, which apply to ECEC. The outcomes are: confident individuals; effective contributors; successful learners; and responsible citizens. To achieve these outcomes, all children need to be safe, healthy, active, nurtured, achieving, respected, responsible and included. These are known as the 'wellbeing indicators'.

Family and community involvement

In **Scotland**, all of the regulatory and inspectorial frameworks include reference to the involvement of family and community, and

this forms part of the overall assessment of the facility. The HMIe inspection framework 'How Good is Our School?' makes specific reference to the involvement of parents and of the community

(www.hmie.gov.uk/documents/publication/hgi_osjte3.pdf) and also gives advice as to how to evidence such involvement. The process for pre-school inspections is set out on their website and includes questionnaires that would be used by the HMIe to find out the views of parents and other stakeholders (www.hmie.gov.uk/NR/exeres/669485C2-085C-45AA-9095-9F1235953E62.frameless.htm). The National Care Standards also explicitly require evidence of parental and community involvement (www.infoscotland.com/nationalcaresstandards/files/early-education.pdf).

There is a duty in Scotland under the Local Government in Scotland Act (2003) for local authorities and their partner agencies to ensure that 'community engagement' demonstrably contributes to the development of policy, strategy and services. This of course means that views must be gathered and taken into account, not that decisions will always reflect these views. While there is no real reliable mechanism for ensuring that views are representative, for example while questionnaires may be sent to all parents or to a representative sample, certain groups are more likely than others to complete and return them. For this reason other approaches are used such as focus groups, accessing particular groups through other services, or ensuring staff encourage/support those less likely to participate to make their views known.

Relationship and transitions between ECEC and school

The age of compulsory education in the UK is low by European standards, being five in **England, Scotland** and **Wales** and four in **Northern Ireland** (ie a child in Northern Ireland reaching the age of four between 1 September of that year and 1 July of the following year should begin compulsory education in September of the following year). In practice many children in England, Scotland and Wales start at primary school earlier than 5 years, entering reception or first classes the year before, though usually on a voluntary basis. In Scotland, for example, children may enter compulsory education in the August if their fifth birthday falls before 1 March of the following year ie they could be less than four and a half when starting school. If parents wish the child to have a further year at nursery this is at the discretion of the local authority and is not funded by the Scottish Government if the child has already had two years of pre-school funding. Generally local authorities would need to be persuaded of the educational necessity of deferring entry to school before approving this.

In all parts of the **UK**, many 3-and 4-year-olds are already in nursery classes in primary school. So for many starting primary schooling involves a transition *within* the same school - the transition *to* school is often at 3 or 4, rather than 5.

The curricula in **England, Scotland** and **Wales**, to greater or lesser extent, span both early education and compulsory schooling. The early years curriculum in **England** is the only one also to cover children under and over three years, but only covers the first year of primary school; the **Scottish** and **Welsh** curricula only start at three years but run up to seven and 18 years respectively.

Teachers in school-based provision (eg nursery classes) will have trained to work with primary school children, but will not *necessarily* be experienced/specifically trained in early years. None will have been trained to work with children under 3 years.

Note on out-of-school services

There has been a rapid increase in **England** in recent years in 'school-age childcare' services, as part of the government's overall 'childcare' strategy; the number of after school clubs in England (which children can attend before and after school hours) increased from 4,900 in 2001 to 8,700 in 2007, while holiday clubs (specifically for children in school holidays) increased from 2,800 (in 2003) to 5,800 (in 2007).

After school and holiday clubs are mainly run by for-profit private providers (43-44%) or by non-profit private providers (26% and 32% respectively); 25% of after school clubs, but only 12% of holiday clubs are run by schools or colleges themselves. Privately-run clubs may contract or other partnership agreements

with particular schools.

After school clubs are generally open for short hours (before and after school) and are not incorporated into schools; those located on school sites are usually run separately from the school. The staff in after school clubs mainly work part-time, averaging 18 hours a week in 2007, and have lower levels of qualification than other 'childcare' workers.

Provision of school-age childcare services has also increased in **Scotland**, and has been supported by the Scottish Government since devolution in 1998. Today there are over 1,000 registered providers of these services, with nearly 50,000 children attending.

Current developments and issues

Current developments

England

Currently 2,900 children's centres open in England, with a target of 3,500 by 2010. Every school to be an 'extended school' by 2010, including 'wraparound care' as part of core offer.

Improvement in qualifications of 'childcare' workforce, with goal by 2015 of graduate leadership (EYP) in all nurseries + other staff all at level three.

Entitlement to early education to increase from 12.5 to 15 hours a week; plans to extend free early education to disadvantaged two year olds.

Scotland

Implementation of the Early Years Framework. As this is to be delivered through the Single Outcome Agreements there is no national action plan in any meaningful way. Each community planning partnership (normally the local authority and its partner agencies – NHS, Police, voluntary sector, and others e.g. local enterprise agency) must set out their intended improvements in line with the 15 national outcomes

(<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/About/scotPerforms/outcomes>) and the 45 national indicators (<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/About/scotPerforms/indicators>). While CPPs have the capacity and authority to develop appropriate local indicators, by and large they have used those from this list, or existing PIs for individual agencies, ie absence of dental decay, number of pre-school centres receiving positive inspection reports, and being breastfed at 6/8 weeks feature prominently in this. Work is taking place at national level to develop new and more appropriate indicators, however as community planning partnerships can decide whether or not these are included in their SOA, their impact at this stage is entirely

speculative.

It is not clear yet whether the extension of pre-school provision to certain two year olds will apply in Scotland. Apparently this will be up to the Scottish Government though at this stage it is not possible to say whether the funding would be over and above the current settlement or not. Clearly this would impact on the likelihood of the Scottish Government taking up the offer! There also may be issues of coherence with *Getting it right for every child* if the funding is tied to very specific provision.

Experts' issues

There are a number of common issues in both England and Scotland. Despite administrative integration of ECEC within education, there is a continuing split in the ECEC system between 'childcare' and 'early education' (eg in access, provision, funding, workforce, regulation (Scotland), so that integration is, in practice, only partial. The development of the early years sector still reflects the origins of the component parts as child-care for working parents, nursery classes, or services which support vulnerable children and their families. This has left a fragmented and fragmenting system, with different types of services for different groups.

ECEC has also been strongly marketised, leaving a strong reliance on parental fees and the for profit sector, especially in 'childcare'. This contributes towards a continuing poor position for the childcare workforce, marked by low qualifications and poor pay; there is a commitment in both countries to require higher levels of qualification among staff and managers of early years services, but this requires pay and other employment conditions to be addressed.

The common UK leave policy is poorly

Current developments and issues

designed, with a long but low paid maternity leave and a weak parental leave that provides no incentives for use by fathers, and overall there is no articulation with ECEC services. The separation of decision-making authority over policy areas impacts on children. In particular, the fact that tax/benefits is a reserved matter, ie decided by the UK Government, makes it problematic to plan in the individual nations in a coherent way.

Both countries also face the implementation of new early years frameworks, the EYFS for England and the Early Years Framework in Scotland.

Scotland has moved towards a more devolved approach in the relationship between national and local government and other partners. In England, the relationship remains a highly centralised and prescriptive 'governing' approach.

Two issues are raised specifically for Scotland. While government policy in Scotland has formally promoted an integrated approach to service provision since the publication of the

'For Scotland's Children' report in 2001, the impact of this has largely been to join up managerially education and children's social care services. In many cases, however, there is limited integration of service below senior management level. Community Planning (a statutory duty since the introduction of the Local Government in Scotland Act (2003)) means that local authorities have to plan alongside partner agencies, though again the evidence that this is bringing about genuine integration is limited.

Services which specifically support vulnerable families are not only in most cases highly targeted but are indeed accessed mainly by referral. There is no strong sense that Scotland is moving to supplying high quality inclusive services for all, thus reducing the probability of problems for children and families and achieving better outcomes across the board. Scottish legislation and public sector spending decisions continue to encourage a culture of service provision in reaction to identified concerns at individual level rather than identifying risk in a strategic way and delivering services to minimise this.

Notes

¹ The United Kingdom has four constituent nations: England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. This report focuses on the first two, referring to Wales and Northern Ireland where there are major differences.

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