

Highlands and Islands

Childcare in Rural and Island Communities

Evidence Report
2024/2025

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SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION

Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE), in partnership with the Care and Learning Alliance (CALA), has been asked to present an evidence-based report to Scottish Ministers, which consolidates our knowledge of the childcare accessibility challenges facing rural and island communities. This work is being carried out under the banner of the Highlands & Islands Regional Economic Partnership (HIREP) which is described further in the report. The report demonstrates the scale, urgency and impact of the childcare crisis facing the region, and assesses the feasibility, potential impacts and deliverability of proposed actions to respond to and address these challenges.

The views expressed within this report are those of HIE, except where we have sought the input of the Scottish Government, the Care Inspectorate and COSLA, with the views of other parties clearly denoted within the text.

Evidence, examples and input into the report and attached appendices have been provided by our communities and partner agencies from across the region.

Whilst this evidence report considers the impact of the childcare accessibility challenges across the Highlands and Islands region specifically through an economic development lens – in particular the impact on economic prosperity, repopulation and talent retention across our region – it is clear that the current models of childcare provision are not meeting all of the wider needs of our rural and island communities and population.

Through the presentation of this Evidence Report, it is intended that this can provide a starting point to work proactively with the Scottish Government, the Care Inspectorate and national regulators, to respond to and address the severe childcare challenges facing the region.

This work is not being carried out in isolation. HIE's current 5-year strategy - [Strategy and operating plan | Highlands and Islands Enterprise | HIE](#) - includes childcare as one of the critical enabling infrastructure and services to "advance our regional transformational opportunities, attract and leverage external and inward investment, and ensure our communities thrive". The national population Strategy launched in March 2021 - [A Scotland for the future: opportunities and challenges of Scotland's changing population - gov.scot](#) – has a strong focus on childcare, noting:

"A lack of access to high quality and affordable childcare is a barrier to encouraging young families to move to an area. We understand this can be a key challenge in rural and island areas, which tend to have higher proportions of people who have a second job and who are self-employed, working part-time and working from home. Families in these areas need flexible, wrap-around childcare to accommodate non-standard or seasonal working patterns; childcare before/after school, weekends and holiday; and they need it to be very local to avoid long travel times or routes that can be disrupted in adverse weather. The challenges to address for these areas include: attracting and retaining a qualified workforce; providing sustainable services that are flexible enough for the patterns of rural employment; and minimising travel times for children and families to a childcare setting."

There is the opportunity to create and develop a Rural and Islands Childcare Toolkit that would enable communities to choose the best childcare models to meet the needs of their local working families. The toolkit would encompass both national and new/amended local models of childcare, specific for rural and Island communities. This allows for a more place-based approach to be delivered.

This approach would continue to put the safety, health and well-being of the children at the forefront of any childcare provision, but working with the Scottish Government and the regulators, recognise the fragility of many rural and island communities and seek to provide local childcare solutions which wherever possible work for the local economy, population and community, in terms of inclusive growth, poverty reduction and economic prosperity.

Section 3 contains examples and evidence on a community-by-community basis.

The ROLE of HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS REGIONAL ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP (HIREP)

The Highlands and Islands Regional Economic Partnership (HIREP) was established in 2021 to enable inclusive and sustainable economic growth and build resilience throughout the region, by identifying and focussing on areas of joint strategic purpose and to provide co-ordinated action in pursuit of regional growth opportunities and to address shared challenges. HIREP is a partnership of public, private, third sector and academic organisations, working together to realise the region's economic potential in a sustainable and inclusive way.

HIREP's Regional Economic Strategy (Draft 2024) recognises the role of childcare (and adult care) as part of the critical infrastructure for economic and population growth.

The Strategy identifies:

- 19% of children (aged under 16) are living in relative low-income families (21% nationally)
- Population challenges are cross-cutting, impacted by factors such as:
 - Expensive and poor public transport options, reducing options for people who do not have a car/cannot afford a car to commute to work or access public services such as child and adult care provision: and
 - Access to core services e.g. Health and social care (including elderly and childcare) and education

The availability of services across all parts of the region is fundamental to the ability to retain and attract population. These services include childcare and adult social care. Delivering such services across the Highlands and Islands is logically challenging and costly. The need to deliver over distance and the lack of economies of scale as a result of small and dispersed populations, requires innovation, flexibility, partnership and significant resources.

HIREP continues to highlight the region's unique needs in child and adult care provision with a regional voice supported by robust evidence. This enables HIREP to:

- Advocate for and develop alternative ways of funding and providing key public and private services in the region
- Develop and communicate a clear HIREP position in regional and rural policy and funding discussions with governments to secure effective policy and maximise resources to realise regional opportunities
- Identify the national systems and policies which are not currently delivering for the region and work towards national recognition that these may not apply to the HIREP region considering its unique geography and dispersed population.
- Design and implement innovative service delivery models

HIREP has established a Sub Group focusing on childcare with representatives from the 7 Local Authorities, CALA, SCMA, the Scottish Out of School Care Network (SOSCN), and Scottish Government officials. The Sub Group is chaired by Moray Council with the purpose to 'align processes and approaches for the development and growth of the childcare sector within the Highlands and Islands area, with a particular focus on Rural and Island Communities'. In addition to work led by HIE to present the evidence of the childcare crisis in the region to the Scottish Government in an effort to find new solutions and a way forward, HIREP itself will set out a Delivery Plan to include Childcare across the region, based on the evidence that has come from across the communities of the region. Appendix A sets out the principal roles of the key partners involved in childcare provision in the region, including HIREP and its Sub Group.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Within the Programme for Government 2024/25, growing Scotland's economy and eradicating child poverty are key priorities. A fully active workforce is vital to the economic and community prosperity of the Highlands and Islands and HIE's aim is to build a stronger economy and a better future for the region's people, businesses and communities. To enable the region to do this, there is a need to address barriers, such as access to childcare, in ways which will allow people to reach their full economic potential. The region recognises that childcare is critical for the retention of the population, and our ability to attract people to the Highlands and Islands as well as being of vital importance to support positive experiences and outcomes for all children.

Childcare in the Highlands and Islands has many complex challenges related to staffing and recruitment, bureaucracy and paperwork, funding and lack of business viability. These are particularly acute and amplified in our more remote rural and Island communities where childcare is a critical part of a much broader population agenda. It is an enabler for working families to reach their full economic potential and as part of the economic infrastructure to reduce underemployment, and to provide access to a flexible workforce for our businesses and key industry sectors, reducing skills gaps and skills shortages across the region.

Working families in these areas need more than the current statutory offering with access to flexible all age childcare to accommodate non-standard seasonal work patterns; childcare before/after school, weekends and holidays; and solutions ideally need to be local to avoid long travel times and to avoid routes that can commonly be disrupted in adverse weather.

The challenges are complex, and the solutions are multi-faceted. National policy, programmes and existing models of childcare do not always fit or address the needs of our rural and Island communities and a lack of available or affordable childcare, particularly for the Under 2s and out of school care, is preventing many working parents from reaching their full economic potential.

Working with Scottish Government and key partners such as the Care and Learning Alliance (CALA), the proposed future actions and solutions need to be developed as a 'toolbox' of provision to suit individual community childcare needs – inclusive of all the national models of childcare and including the potential new place-based models such as the Single Care Model, subsidised childminder roles and the Rural Childcare/Care Practitioner. HIREP's role will be identifying the regional challenges in childcare for our communities and businesses and working with partners to find the solutions to enable the effective delivery of childcare solutions.

This will require an innovative and place-based approach by regulatory bodies such as the Care Inspectorate, with the need to recognise the importance of focussing on the outcome - a resilient, flexible, quality and place-based care service - rather than the urban based systems and structures for childcare currently in place which often do not meet the needs and realities of rural life and rural communities.

This would enable the following to be achieved:

1. A place-based approach addressing localised requirements, particularly in those rural and Island communities where childcare needs are not easily met from existing models of childcare provision.
2. Identification of solutions to childcare provision to suit individual community childcare needs, encompassing both national and local models of childcare.

3. Growing and sustaining a high-quality childcare sector in our rural and Island communities that has dedicated and skilled childcare practitioners that are part of a professional, trusted and confident workforce delivering positive outcomes for children, families and communities.
4. A childcare offering in a rural or Island community that enables working families to stay, work and reach their full economic potential, and contribute fully to the local economy.

The summary of proposed actions is contained in Section 3.

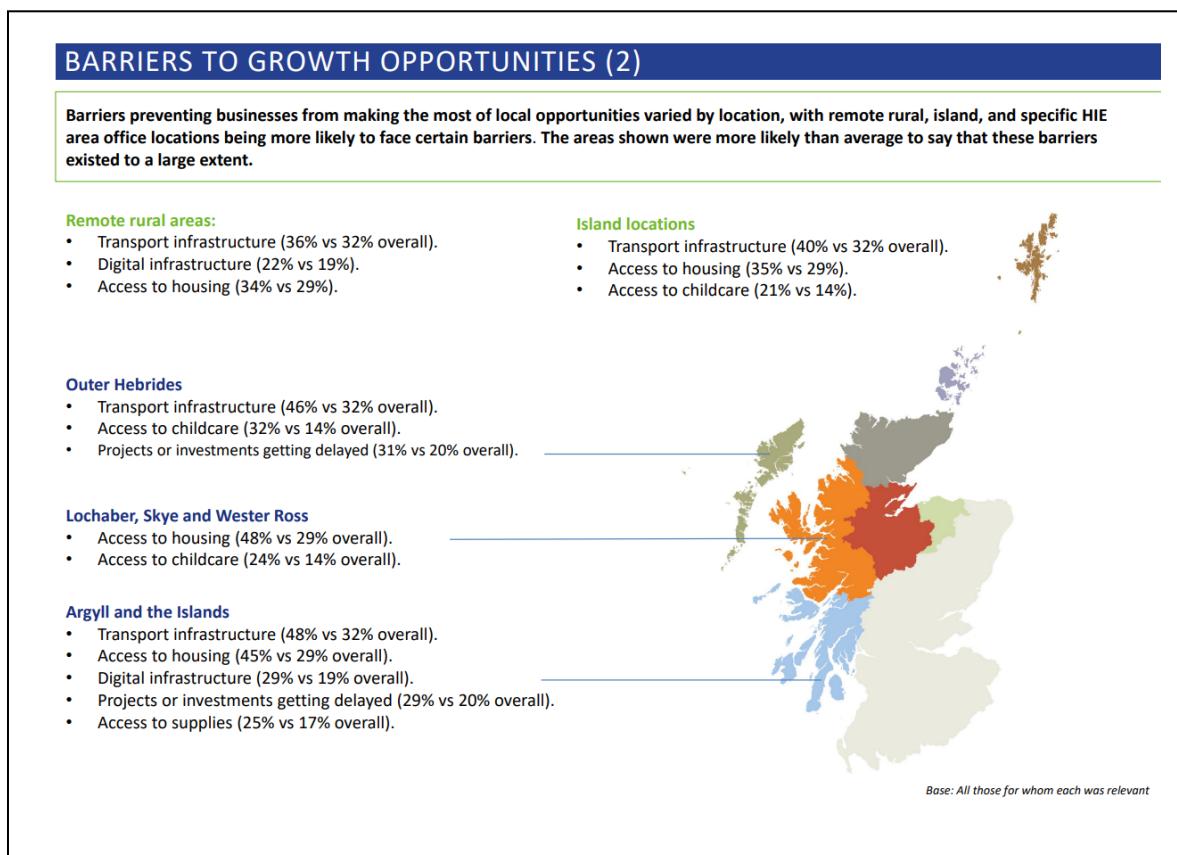
CHILDCARE in RURAL and ISLAND COMMUNITIES

CONSOLIDATING our KNOWLEDGE

Challenges and Accessibility

Childcare is a critical part of the much broader population agenda as an enabler for working families to reach their full economic potential and as part of the economic infrastructure to reduce underemployment. It has many complex challenges which can be amplified in our rural and Island communities such as: staffing and recruitment, bureaucracy and paperwork, Care Inspectorate (CI) regulations, funding, small numbers of children - all which create a lack of business viability. National Policy and Regulatory Frameworks are not always able to address the needs of our rural and Island communities and a lack of available and affordable childcare in rural and island communities under current national policy is preventing many working parents from reaching their full economic potential.

In January 2024 HIE published its [HIE BUSINESS PANEL](#) report – it contains a map that shows how businesses have referenced childcare issues as impacting on them:



In October 2022, HIE undertook a [My Life in the Highlands and Islands \(October 2022\)](#) survey. It highlighted those living and working in remote and rural areas were more likely to find it difficult to access courses or training online (13%), with 43% of those being in households with children and citing childcare or care caring reasons.

Also in 2022, HIE undertook research to evidence the extent and nature of rural and regional disadvantage experienced in the Highlands and Islands, relative to Scotland and the UK - [Rural and Regional Disadvantage](#) (May 2022). Excerpts include:

- “Childcare - All three and four-year-olds, and eligible two-year-olds, are currently entitled to 600 hours of funded Early Learning and Childcare a year. From August 2020, this increased to 1140 hours with funded places provided at the same rate in urban and rural settings. (<https://www.gov.scot/policies/early-education-and-care/>). However, there is evidence that providers in rural areas are unable to meet needs. Recent research with childcare providers in Scotland found that there was a lack of choice in rural areas ([Rural childcare provision, innovative models and the needs of agricultural families: research - gov.scot](#)). There is a shortage of early years provision (ages 0 to 3) and childminders. They had particular concerns around financial sustainability when operating in rural areas, for example the number of staff required to meet guidance and the cost of renting shared buildings. The financial viability of services was affected by lower numbers of children and changes in demand. There was a perception that many of the smaller services in rural areas had closed due to these issues. Providers suggested the need to support rural childcare services through start-up grants, top-up fees for settings with a small number of children and additional funding for staff wages and transport.”
- “The study findings are reflected in the National Islands Plan Survey, published in July 2021, in which survey respondents felt there was a lack of support for young people to remain, move or return to the islands. There was perceived to be a lack of employment, training and higher education opportunities and a lack of childcare options to fit with residents' working patterns.”

Staffing and Recruitment

The sector has one of the most qualified workforces for the lowest pay which creates significant issues retaining current and recruiting future staff. This is challenging in a rural context when other sectors such as Tourism and Food and Drink are competing within the same labour pool and experiencing staff shortages. Severe staffing shortages are also evident within the region's adult social care sector. Businesses, including social enterprises and third sector organisations, operating within the adult social care and childcare sectors have been impacted significantly from the recent announcement to increase NI contributions and the increase in the Real Living Wage. This will negatively impact any planned expansion of businesses within these sectors in our rural and Island communities and may indeed cause some businesses to cease trading in communities where the childcare services are already fragile or non-existent.

Bureaucracy, Paperwork and Funding (link to regulated and unregulated)

The challenge for the sector, which could also form part of the solution, is to find the balance in regulations for unregulated and regulated childcare – this could be a game changer in the Highlands and Islands, particularly in our rural communities where perhaps so many more organisations could deliver School Age Childcare if the regulations were more appropriate to rural circumstances. Scottish Government are currently working with the Care Inspectorate on a feasibility study to review the current regulatory framework for School Age Childcare and explore options for change, with the outcomes from this study due in Spring 2025.

Care Inspectorate Regulations

The on-going development of the Single Care Model has enabled the beginning of a shift in perceptions of rural and Island care by the Care Inspectorate, which is important to acknowledge, and they are keen to work with CALA, HIE and partners around definitions of care, regulation and legislation to allow a pilot to be delivered in the Highland region hopefully by mid-2025.

Travel Times and Distance (particularly important for dispersed rural locations)

Very often, due to the low numbers of children living in specific communities, settings have to cater for working families who have to travel over 20 miles to access childcare, often on single track roads. Families in these rural and Island communities need more than the current statutory offering (ELC funded hours) with access to flexible all age childcare to accommodate non-standard seasonal work patterns; childcare before/after school, weekends and holidays; and the childcare solutions need to be very local to avoid long travel times and to avoid routes that can be disrupted in adverse weather.

Within the **My Life in the Highlands and Islands (October 2022)** survey results, 13% of respondents have more than one job and higher amongst those living on islands (17%) and in remote rural locations (17%). Among those who have more than one job, 51% say this is because they need to, while 46% say it is because they prefer to. Those on the highest annual household incomes (£52,000+) are more likely to say they do more than one job out of preference (67%), while those who earn less than £26,000 are more likely to say this is because they need to (79%). This then exacerbates accessing childcare in these rural and Island communities.

Small Numbers of Children and Business Viability

As an example, within Highland, the Local Authority has c40 rural ELC settings with less than 8 children and due to the small number of children in these settings, it makes it piecemeal for other childcare providers and childminders to try to create and sustain a full time financially viable business model. This creates challenges for parents who do work full time so need to access childcare from 3pm to 6pm and during the holidays — very often this provision just isn't available, causing significant issues for parents, employers and most importantly the children themselves trying to work around this situation.

Gaelic Provision

Bòrd na Gàidhlig recognise that the different levels of Gaelic medium education give children a wonderful opportunity to both play and learn in Gaelic. They have found that babies and young children have the ability to acquire additional languages from an early age and Gaelic Medium ELC can support and develop this ability. In addition, Gaelic ELC can support families where Gaelic is the language of the home.

Like English medium all age childcare, the Gaelic all age childcare provision suffers from the same challenges, and it is amplified in our rural and Island communities such as Skye and the Outer Hebrides. This is due to smaller pools of labour, travel times and the need to recruit fluent speaking Gaelic childcare staff.

<https://www.gaidhlig.scot/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Gaelic-Medium-Early-Learning-Childcare-Guidance-Stuireadh-Trath-Irean-GE.pdf>

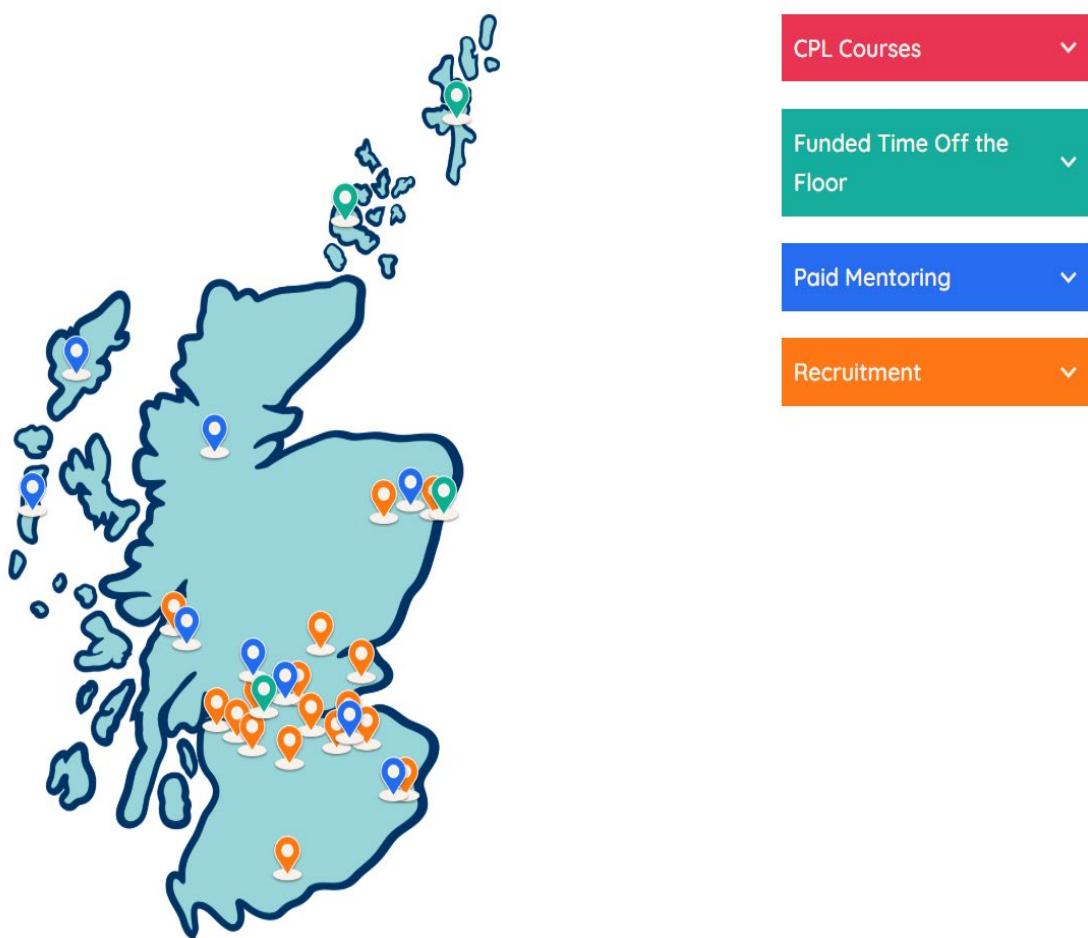
National Policies and Programmes in Rural and Island Communities

From the evidence HIE has gathered for this Report, there are several examples where national childcare policies and programme delivery do not take into account the reality of the challenges of effective childcare provision in our rural and Island communities.

- **Scottish Childminding Association**

One example is the current Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA) Programme for Scotland's Childminding Future (PSCF) which has been operating in 19 local authority areas in Scotland during year 1. All Local Authorities within the Highlands and Islands were offered the opportunity to participate in the recruitment programme with Argyll and Bute Local Authority engaging in Year 1. Over and above the funding provided within the national recruitment programme, Argyll and Bute Local Authority was offering a £2,000 incentive to new childminders to try to make the programme work for a rural and island geography with often low numbers of children in any one area, and where it remains difficult to make the traditional model of childminding viable. Discussions are positively happening with other Local Authorities in the region regarding participation in the national programme in Year 2. In parallel, all local authorities are also offered the opportunity to participate in the childminder retention pilots.

SCMA Childminder Recruitment and Retention in Scotland

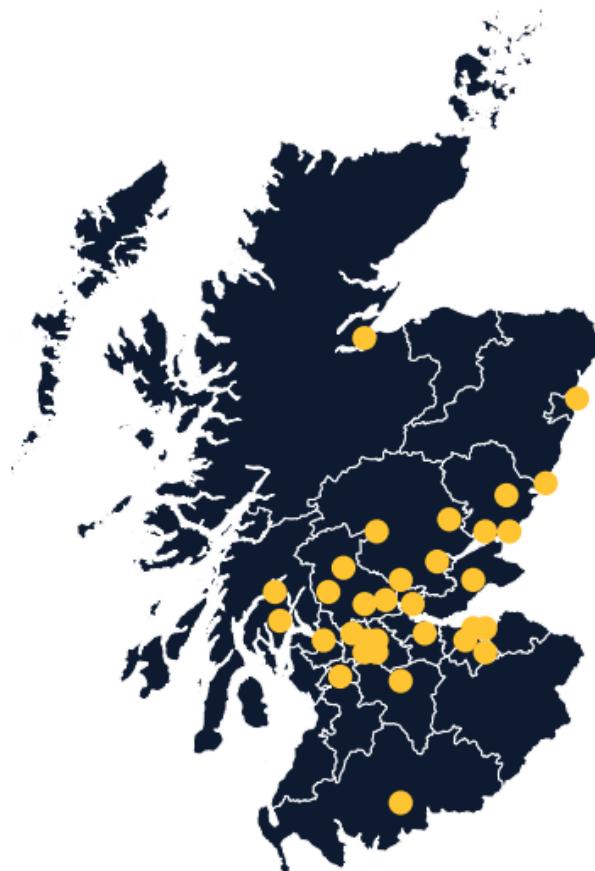


Workforce Retention - Scottish Childminding Association

- **Scottish Football Association**

Another current example is the funding secured by the Scottish Football Association (SFA) to deliver unregulated breakfast and after school clubs for primary aged children focusing on communities affected by poverty. Inverness Caledonian Thistle Football Club (ICTFC) and Ross County Football Club (RCFC) successfully secured funding, but there has been no wider delivery of this initiative within any rural or Island community in the region. ICTFC have worked closely with primary schools in Inverness and in partnership with Elgin City. RCFC have worked closely with schools in Alness, but the reality is a large geographical area including the West Highlands, Argyll and the Island communities of our region haven't been able to benefit from this investment. It is clear that the smaller, local league clubs in the Highlands and Islands just don't have the capacity or capability to deliver such a programme of unregulated activities, and even for those who might be able to with additional support, there is then the potential to displace any regulated care in these rural and Island communities which will most likely already be fragile due to the low numbers of children.

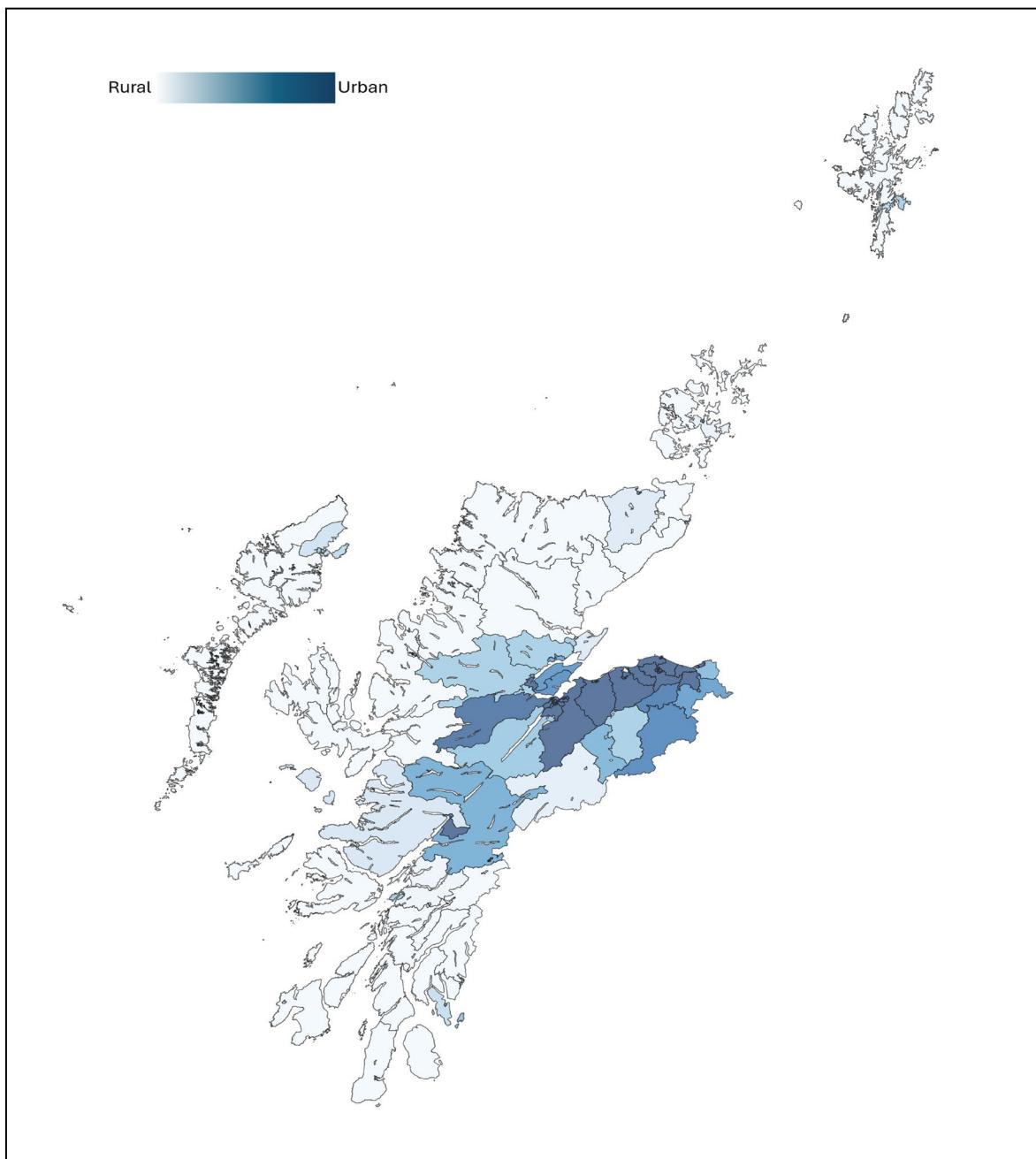
SFA Extra Time Programme



https://www.scottishfa.co.uk/media/12403/sfa-extra-time-annual-impact-report_v6.pdf

Defining Rural - Map of HIE's Rural and Urban Geography

Most of the Highlands and Islands can be defined as rural with the exception of the City of Inverness. Typically, rural areas have a low population density and normally consist of small settlements.



The above map is the result of HIE's reflections and insights rather than full desk research and survey-based work. It highlights clearly the large swathe of the region's rural landmass which includes almost all of the many communities that are the prime focus of this evidenced report. HIE's strategy, responding to Scottish Government guidance, makes very clear the imperative associated with increasing geographical targeting to disadvantaged areas to support inclusive growth, as well as the targeting of areas of economic opportunity.

SECTION 2

COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVE – the EVIDENCE

This section sets out the reality of the childcare crisis across our communities. With a range of evidenced examples, collected and put forward for each area from across the communities HIE is working with, and the agencies working in and with these communities. Appendix B then presents a more granular and detailed picture of the childcare position in each community, identifying where there is some childcare provision available, where this is a limited provision, and those communities where there is no or severely limited childcare provision – demonstrating in detail the scale of the childcare crisis across the region's communities.

The picture in each local area is different and unique to that community and place but what is clear is that the lack of accessible and affordable all age childcare is causing significant issues for families and communities, particularly in the more rural areas of our region, and preventing businesses recruiting and growing, and reducing economic opportunity and growth.

A number of the local areas have also highlighted the lack of childcare as a priority in their Local Place Plans, while in other areas there are examples of what businesses, the local communities and/or local stakeholders have done themselves to try and address the lack of childcare. A number of Scottish Government funded initiatives taking place in different communities to try and resolve the issue are highlighted but these tend to be at an early stage in their development, and the childcare crisis is happening now and as the evidence shows from each area, it is getting worse particularly in terms of Under 2s care and out of school care provision.

Our Communities:

Shetland

Shetland has been chosen by the Scottish Government as one of the Local Authority areas in Scotland to pilot an Early Adopters Community. The aim of these Early Adopting Communities is to improve the lives of families most at risk of poverty, and to learn and understand what is needed at a local level. Work to date has included engagement and scoping work to understand the childcare needs of the local communities, and the infrastructure and services needed to provide childcare from nine months to the end of primary school. From September 2024, Shetland Islands Council and the local communities have started to implement and develop a system of childcare in their chosen communities, with consideration given to priority groups. The funding for the Early Adopters Programme is live until March 2026.

The lack of childcare is also impacting local businesses. On the Island of Yell there is no childcare available and local businesses as well as working families are having to make adjustments. There is also an example of a Shetland based business who is having to help cover their staffs' childcare costs at a private childcare provider to enable staff to undertake their jobs and give them more availability to fulfil their hours and the company's requirements. An excellent response from the company, however not all companies will be able to offer such benefits.

As with all rural and islands settings, the concentration of childcare is usually provided in the Island's main town, Lerwick, and this is not necessarily a viable option for parents in the outlying areas of Shetland mainland and certainly not the isles.

Orkney

At a recent Orkney business forum, a lack of all age childcare was highlighted as a significant challenge for businesses, which is having a notable impact on the workforce – limiting capacity for parents to work. Unemployment in Orkney is low, however, the inability to access childcare when, where and how it is needed is one of the main reasons reported, alongside health issues, from those that are not in employment.

Current childminders have extensive waiting lists (up to 3 years) with almost 50% of childminders based on Mainland Orkney in Kirkwall. Unregulated care helps with waiting lists for 'childcare activities' through the school holidays, however, this tends to be for children of school age.

There are significant numbers of parents who are engaged in employment that have working patterns that can change week to week, making it difficult to access regulated childcare. Childminders require fixed patterns of use (to ensure their viability), but parents cannot afford to pay for childcare they will not utilise. Alongside this, with little provision of regulated wrap around care and a need for flexible childcare, there is a host of informal and unregulated care.

Through the recent HIE funded SCMA recruitment campaign, new childminders were recruited in Orphir, Sanday, Kirkwall, Harray and Holm. Unfortunately, all but 1 of the 8 childminders that became qualified to deliver childcare are now closed for business. Those no longer in operation provided feedback that they ceased trading as they found it difficult to run a financially viable business. The main reasons for this being that regulations and paperwork were overly onerous, and the childminders own, and family children, are being counted as part of the ratio allowed.

As part of their budget considerations, Orkney Islands Council are reviewing the possibility of reducing the current out of school hours care provision at several of their nursery settings. This further dilutes the availability of childcare out with Kirkwall. As with all rural and islands settings, however, the concentration of childcare being provided in the main town Kirkwall is not necessarily a viable option for parents in the outlying areas of Orkney Mainland and certainly not the isles, which have no registered childminding provision.

Innse Gall – Outer Hebrides

Within the Western Isles, particularly with a focus on the Island of Uist, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (CnES) had a successful ADAP bid into Scottish Government. The aim of their bid was to (1) explore and pilot new childcare provision and initiatives in Uist and (2) tailored skills packages to be offered which would include childcare support:

- Piloting New Childcare Provision on Uist: Increasing the much-needed availability of childcare, including after-school and holiday care
- Parents at Work - Qualifications with Childcare: Parents and other individuals are supported to return to employment or retrain for new roles, with free childcare provided to reduce barriers to participation. Training is available for five participants, offering 6 hours per week over 13 weeks and is delivered within a childcare setting

The lack of childcare has an impact on business operations too. On Barra a business, looking to scale up, has struggled to retain a key member of staff due to having no childcare available to allow the person to work the desired shifts. The employee is therefore having to work reduced hours which has a negative impact on the business operations.

In Uist, a business owner is unsure how she can fully deliver her offer, as there is no childcare available to her. The impact this has on her working hours and number of hours per week, is considerable, as she can only work reduced hours, based on when the child is sleeping or in the care of her husband. The business is largely seasonal and so it heavily relies on the owner being able to work full time during this period.

As with other rural and islands settings, the travel time from home and/or place of work to a childcare setting can be vast and this then limits the potential job opportunities for parents wishing to work.

Isle of Lewis

The closure of An Cotan Nursery and Hebridean Nursery has created a childcare challenge for approximately 50 families living and working on Lewis. NHS Western Isles did have an initial interest in providing childcare in Stornoway when An Cotan closed due to the impact on their healthcare workforce, but this was never pursued.

CnES also showed an interest in undertaking a childcare parental survey for the Island of Lewis and this was undertaken by Alasdair Allan MSP's office throughout the Western Isles from Barra to the Butt of Lewis.

There are currently no childminders on the Isle of Harris.

Uist, Benbecula and Barra

The childcare crisis in Uist enabled the establishment of a Childcare Forum, chaired by HIE's Innse Gall office. Representatives from the Early Years Team at CnES, the ADAP Settlement Officer, CALA and local childcare providers regularly meet to discuss the challenges and potential solutions. Alasdair Allan MSP's office attends several of the meetings.

The Forum members hosted a Childcare Recruitment Pop Up Event on Uist and Barra in 2024 to try and promote the sector as a career opportunity and find out about the childcare needs of parents living and working on the Islands. This found there is a lack of all aged childcare provision particularly after school and during holidays. There is also very limited care for 0–3-year-olds.

On Barra, the existing childminder retired, and this had an impact on local employed people (police and school) who were unable to return to work and stay on the Island. There is also a local resident

who has had to access childcare in Uist, to enable her to attend her place of work in Uist. This requires a ferry journey and lengthy commute. There have been attempts through the Pop-Up recruitment event and the current SCMA recruitment campaign to generate interest again in childminding on the Island. There is currently an individual progressing through the SCMA Recruitment process – but there is a risk of this not materialising due to the individual finding it very difficult to meet the Care Inspectorate regulations required.

HIGHLAND

Highland Council has flexible childcare as a key priority and enabler within their Reducing Poverty Action Plan and Community Wealth Building Strategy and Plan. Within Highland, and a focus on the North West Highlands, Highland Council had a successful Scottish Government ADAP funding bid. The work to date on childcare has been research focused and looking at new models with the hope of piloting and testing with future rounds of funding such as:

- Single Care Model – led by CALA to develop a model of care enabling a practitioner to be employed and work across adult and childcare care
- Subsidised Childminding Model – currently being researched to look at a model enabling a childminder in a rural community to be subsidised ensuring financial viability
- Rural Childcare/Care Practitioner – looking at a model of childcare similar to a ‘mobile childminder’ working outwith a domestic setting – within Scotland, this model isn’t regulated but has been approved in England on 1st November 2024

Within the geography of the Highland Council area, there are c.40 ELC settings with less than 8 children. This creates funding challenges as well as challenges to meet the staffing requirements of settings in rural and Island communities. Highland Council, in Autumn 2024, undertook a Highland wide parental survey to determine the gaps and challenges in childcare across the Local Authority area given the seriousness of the position.

Highland Council, through their Employability Team, are in early discussions with SCMA to potentially participate in the current national Childminder Recruitment Campaign.

Caithness and Sutherland

This area, particularly in the North West Highlands, has many challenges to overcome to enable the provision of cost-effective childcare options. It can be challenging due to the cost of running such settings, whether 0-3 years, ELC or out of school care, with very low numbers of children. There are staffing challenges in all settings and limited or no out of school care.

Highland Council and HIE have been working with the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) at Dounreay. The NDA are keen to work with partners to improve childcare provision for staff and provide a community benefit. There is very limited out of school care provision available in Caithness which prevents employees from reaching their full economic potential.

In Kinlochbervie, HIE is aware of vacancies in the village where a working parent has applied, been successfully selected and then declined a job post due to a lack of all age childcare within the village.

There are currently now only 3 childminders available within the entire Wick and East Caithness Council area which has a population of 13,000. This equates to a maximum of 9 places for children under the age of 2 which has meant significant pressures on working parents and less parents returning to work. HIE is aware of anecdotal evidence where the situation is preventing parents wanting to have further children as they can’t access childcare. It is a real issue for locals, small businesses and a deterrent to attracting new talent to the area.

Lochaber, Skye and Wester Ross

Skye and Lochalsh

A range of partners held a Pop-Up Childcare Recruitment event last year in Portree to help to address childcare workforce shortages on the island. There are currently no childminders and a lack of regulated out of school care. There was interest in childminding but as a mobile childcare provider and not as the current childminding model is due to current legislation. Working families are interested in employing nannies as a current fix to their childcare needs as there is also competition with other sectors for staff on the Island.

In Dunvegan, North Skye the under 50 age population is plummeting with children spread over a vast geographical area. The Community Trust are in the process of establishing some registered childcare within the community but are experiencing major hurdles with the Care Inspectorate.

Within Skye, many hospitality businesses offer shift work to suit school hours – this has an impact on the businesses especially during the school holidays and after school. Public sector organisations are enabling work patterns to suit working parents and healthcare staff and professionals can't work, return to work, or accept new jobs due to a lack of childcare.

Portree Nursery has had to make the decision to close their waiting list for under 3's. The nursery is restricted by their Care Inspectorate registration regarding the number of children that can attend at any one time, and also by the number of staff that are available, due to ratios.

There are 2 validated Local Place Plans (LPP) for Skye and Lochalsh: Broadford and Strath (September 2024) and Lochalsh (October 2024). Within Broadford and Strath their ambition is to (1) Make childcare and education facilities available to encourage families to stay and work in the area and (2) Explore the potential for a mobile outdoor learning and play facility. Within the LPP for Lochalsh the community would like to ensure there is childcare provision for parents to work & socialise.

Wester Ross

There is currently very limited or no formal or informal childcare available within the Wester Ross area. Applecross in South Wester Ross has a population of 230 people living on the peninsula, with 10 children in the school and 3 attending the school nursery, and no childcare available outwith the school hours.

Ullapool, as a main ferry port, currently has 2 registered childminders open for business but due to staffing challenges and attractiveness of the sector, there is no out of school care provision and limited care for 0 – 2 years olds. Ullapool is a potential location for the Single Care Model pilot in partnership with a Care Provider.

Within Wester Ross, Garve and District have a validated Local Place Plan (September 2024). The community's ambition is related to their primary school where they want the children to continue to attend school in Garve and have an improved learning environment including more indoor space.

Lochaber

On the West Coast at Arisaig there is a childminder but with a potential lack of business and consequently the threat of closure in a very rural community. There is potential to subsidise and maintain the service and childcare infrastructure.

Ardnamurchan Community Trust have recently undertaken a community childcare survey. They established the Ardnamurchan Childcare Action Group to look at possible solutions for the current lack of childcare in the area. There was a childminder in Acharacle who has now closed the business, and there is now no wrap around care and/or care for 0-2 years olds available on the peninsula.

Within Lochaber there are 2 validated Local Place Plans: Ardgour (April 2024) and Duror and Kentallen (September 2024). Within Ardgour the community has ambitions to (1) Provide care for older people, home-based care and respite/residential care at Dail Mhor in Strontian and (2) Ensure there is childcare across the area to enable families to stay and work, supplementing Clovullin nursery; and to include a register of what is available.

The communities of Duror and Kentallen recognise the threat of depopulation and within the LPP state “The village school is very much an integral part of the structure of all communities, and youth is the very lifeblood of any community. The possible loss of the village school would have a severe impact on the community. The facility of a village school is high on the list of priorities for prospective buyers of property or those seeking employment within the locality. Closure would prove to be detrimental in that it would discourage new families with school age children moving to the area.” There is also an accompanying requirement for nursery services and wrap around childcare.

Inner Moray Firth

The region's largest transformative project, the Inverness and Cromarty Firth Green FreePort, has the potential to create thousands of jobs with the need for new infrastructure such as housing and childcare to support the workforce. The childcare offering in Inverness is a saturated market but is still creating challenges for recruiting and retaining qualified staff. The impacts of a lack of rural childcare are experienced in the communities on the outskirts of the city such as Beauly, Muir of Ord, Ardersier and Nairn.

Out of school care at Croy is providing childcare to children from Ardersier. This is a subsidised model to enable the children from an outlying village to attend. There is potential to open this up to Cawdor but it is currently at full capacity, and the model is expensive due to the need for rural transport.

The communities of Stratherrick and Foyers have no out of school care. The Care Inspectorate regulations remain challenging for a provider to provide a service within the school buildings after 3pm.

Within Ardersier, the community are keen for discussions to explore establishing a breakfast club and their own out of school care. There could be potential for some very local marketing of childminding, but there will be an impact on the Croy provision in place.

There are 2 validated Local Place Plans within the Inner Moray Firth area: Black Isle (October 2024) and Stratherrick and Foyers (September 2023). For the Black Isle communities, they are very much focused on community infrastructure ensuring facilities and services are fit for purpose & minimise travel, including education, health & social care, infrastructure, recreation, emergency services & other community facilities. Stratherrick and Foyers have an immediate childcare ask from the LPP to provide after-school/nursery care. The lack of significant childcare in the area is a barrier to working families. The community is exploring how to fill this gap. Depending on how this is done, it may involve using local community hubs and/or the two local primary schools.

Moray

Moray Council has established a Moray Childcare Working Group, with 3 subgroups focusing on specific childcare challenges.

The main childcare challenges exist in wraparound care, both for pre-school and school aged children. Moray Chamber of Commerce and Moray Council sought input from local childcare providers asking about the barriers preventing the expansion of their services. Responses suggested a desire to grow or expand but financial pressures and lack of available labour are holding many providers back. There are also challenges with providing transport and additional registration requirements with the Care Inspectorate. There is a current capacity of only 120 wraparound childcare places available across Moray. The limited out of school availability has massive waiting lists – over demand and lack of supply – affecting many working families and businesses.

In June 2024, Moray Chamber of Commerce carried out a survey showing that over 43% of their local business members have faced difficulties in recruiting talent due to childcare issues. Almost 30% of businesses have faced difficulties retaining talent due to a lack of childcare and 55% of businesses have been required to implement new policies to support working parents in recent years.

RAF Lossiemouth and the Kinloss Army Barracks have concerns about the lack of childcare and the impact on the ability of the bases to attract sufficient qualified and experienced personnel to support its growth. There has been some evidence of military personnel turning down postings to RAF Lossiemouth due to the lack of available services for their families, one of which is childcare. Lack of available wraparound childcare, coupled with a minimal familial support network for most of the families, is preventing many military spouses from entering the local labour market. The majority of whom are women.

Moray Council is currently engaged in a public engagement on the future sustainability of the current Learning Estate on an ASG-by-ASG basis and will provide recommendations to elected members. Moray Council currently has 4 ELC settings that provide wraparound childcare during holidays and until 6pm. These are currently being reviewed. Moray Council is also looking at its learning estates and linking with other agencies to identify locations for out of school care, particularly in Buckie and Forres.

Argyll and the Islands, including North Ayrshire

Argyll and Bute Council had a successful ADAP bid into the Scottish Government, but the aim of their bid was purely housing related.

Tiree Community Trust successfully secured £5,000 HIE Innovation Funding to research models of childcare for 0-3 year olds on the Island which was designed to secure new premises for childcare on the Island. It provided a pros and cons analysis of each potential building including space/staffing/adaptation requirements. It concluded that the best option out of all that were considered was the library beside the school. This has led to ongoing positive conversations with the Local Authority but unfortunately the library building is no longer a suitable potential venue. The Community Trust are now looking at a modular solution within the school grounds.

There is potential on the smaller Islands such as Luing, Coll and Gigha to look at innovative models such as subsidised childminder, payment for care of own/family children and the Rural Childcare Practitioner. The Isle of Luing now has a Local Place Plan with growth plans for the Island relating to housing and the need for childcare. On Islay, the South Island Development Trust is currently developing a business plan for a new nursery/childcare setting in Port Ellen, Islay.

The Local Authority has engaged in the SCMA's Programme for Government Childminder Recruitment Campaign (the only LA in our region to participate). To date a further 5 childminders have been recruited with the LA offering a £2,000 incentive to each new childminder.

The Isle of Luing has a validated Local Place Plan (November 2024). The Island has the ambition to reverse depopulation and increase the number of young, working-age families and children on the Island. This is closely linked with the island's economic opportunities. To enable the Island to do this, they need labour, skills and jobs including builders, farmers, fishers, bakers, gardeners, well-being, history group, teachers, carers, childminders, technicians, artists, writers, zoologists, mechanics and blacksmiths. This is a high level, strategic ambition and there are currently no plans to deliver a childcare service as the Trust have no staff to deliver such a project.

Within North Ayrshire, Arran Community and Voluntary Service are currently undertaking a childcare survey on Arran to determine need and current childcare provision. Early responses are showing that parents are delaying having children due to lack of childcare and others have left the Island to enable them to continue working full time and access childcare.

North Ayrshire Council have also agreed to participate in the current SCMA Childminder Recruitment Campaign with a focus on Arran and Cumbrae.

SUCCESSES in the REGION

There are some successful national programmes working well in our rural and Island communities.

These include the Scottish Childminding Association's (SCMA) Programme for Scottish Childminding Future's (PSCF) Retention programme for existing childminders which in Year 2, will have participation from several of the region's Local Authorities. The current PSCF SCMA Childminder Recruitment Programme is active in the Argyll and Bute Local Authority area and discussions are positively happening with other Local Authorities in the region, who will be partnering with SCMA to participate in Year 2 of the national programme for both recruitment and retention. Previously the SCMA HIE-funded recruitment campaign recruited an additional 43 new childminders (March 2024) in the region but not in many of our most rural and island communities. More details of the SCMA HIE Funded Childminder Recruitment Campaign (2022- 2024) are provided in Appendix C to the report.

In February 2024, the Scottish Government launched *Supporting and enabling sustainable communities: An Action Plan to Address Depopulation* (ADAP). Along with housing, transport, digital and education, childcare is a critical priority to help rural and Island communities facing population decline/ reverse the decline.

Highland Council, through their ADAP funding, is undertaking some evidence gathering research into adapting and new models of childcare and adult care. This has come about from working with communities to find out what they would like to see as a childcare offering in their community. There is interest from several rural and Island communities in a childminding model working outwith a domestic setting (Skye, Kinlochbervie, Uist). Communities are also interested in a subsidised childminding model (Arisaig, Uist, Argyll Islands) which would enable financial viability when there are smaller numbers of children needing care.

Within the Western Isles, particularly with a focus on the Island of Uist, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (CnES) had a successful ADAP bid into Scottish Government. The aim of their bid was to (1) explore and pilot new childcare provision and initiatives in Uist and (2) tailored skills packages to be offered which would include childcare support.

Shetland was chosen by the Scottish Government to pilot an Early Adopters Community. The aim of these Early Adopting Communities is to improve the lives of families most at risk of poverty, and to learn and understand what is needed at a local level with a focus on childcare from 9 months of age. Other local authorities, such as Argyll and Bute Council are also delivering creative ideas such as local employability support for careers in childcare in rural and island communities in partnership with InspirAlba which is funded by the Scottish Government's No One Left Behind policy agenda.

Through our work at the local, regional and national level, there remains an important role for HIE. Childcare in the region has many complex challenges and negative economic and community impacts particularly in our rural and Island communities but there is lots of work happening in the background to research and try to provide place-based solutions to the region's childcare challenges. As noted above, as well as our influencing role, HIE has funded a regional childminder recruitment campaign (c.£90k) since 2022 - 2025; a feasibility study to create the Single Care Model (c.£8k) looking at how an employed care practitioner can provide care within both the adult social care and childcare sector; Innse Gall have funded a Pop-Up childcare recruitment event in Uist and Barra (£2k) with a final evidence report and HIE's Argyll and the Islands Area Office have funded some childcare modelling research on Tiree (£5k). HIE's area offices have also funded specific childcare settings including expansion and improvements to outdoor settings (c£500k) and the redevelopment of a nursery setting in Shetland (c£50k).

INTERNATIONAL MODELS of CARE

In partnership with CALA, HIE has been investigating models of childcare, adult social care and intergenerational care in the international context. CALA, with ADAP funding, are currently mapping models from across the world of intergenerational care and joint care which meets the needs of adults and children.

Of particular interest are models of intergenerational care in Australia where they focus on the 'Care Economy' and use terms such as 'exovation' rather than innovation to demonstrate that sometimes it's not a need to invent something new but to break down the current system and rebuild. They have also funded organisations like the YMCA to develop programmes to recruit young people into the care workforce.

The OECD has also recently published research on the Care Economy and how the care sector empowers more women and builds resilient communities.

In Canada, the Government is currently massively funding a \$10-day childcare provision which enables more people to work, but it is not without problems with childcare providers unable to meet demand and not all childcare providers are eligible creating a displaced childcare sector.

In Japan, they are at the forefront of intergenerational care with programmes aimed at improving social capital by enabling care of children and the elderly within a single setting. So far, the research has shown the model to strengthen a community's intergenerational ties and could be a potential way of retaining population.

SECTION 3

THE PROPOSED RESPONSE - ACTIONS and APPROACHES

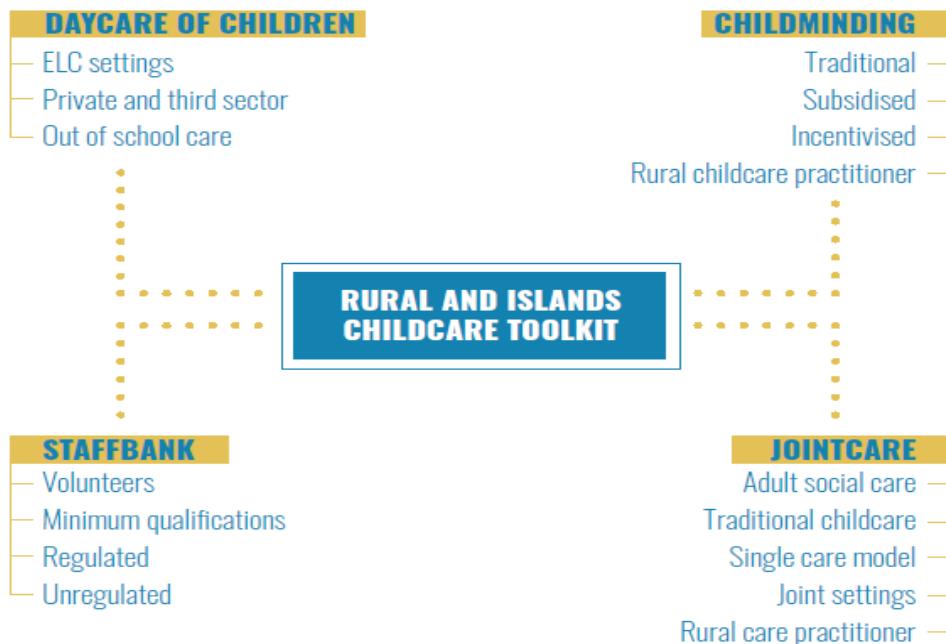
The evidence gathered from across our region for this Report demonstrates the urgency and scale of the childcare challenge, but as the previous section illustrates, there are examples of where different innovative and place-based solutions and approaches are being researched, trialled, developed or indeed starting to make a positive impact.

This section sets out a series of proposed actions and approaches which HIE believes begins to offer a fuller and more effective response to the childcare challenges evidenced across the region and would help to create a comprehensive Rural and Island Childcare Toolkit for the future.

RURAL and ISLANDS CHILDCARE TOOLKIT – AN ILLUSTRATION

Given the distinct and significant childcare challenges and needs of our rural and island communities, as brought to light in this report, and the negative impact they clearly have on the region's economic prosperity and population, it is critical that HIREP is able to work with the Scottish Government, and national and local regulators and stakeholders, to identify and develop effective and innovative childcare solutions for our region.

A childcare toolkit which is able to recognise the distinct childcare needs of different rural and island communities, and work with the community to deliver effective childcare solutions, will be key. Such a toolkit as illustrated below, would combine a mix of national and local, regulated and new/amended models of childcare, all of which ensure the safety, health and well-being of children, but recognise the fragility of many of our communities, particularly in terms of rurality and numbers of children, and allow fit for purpose and place based childcare solutions to be delivered effectively.



Each of the actions and approaches listed below, and divided into short, medium and long term, sets out:

- The current regulatory position, and what is asked of the Scottish Government, the Care Inspectorate, or any other relevant governing or regulatory body for the action or approach to be implemented
- The progress made to date
- The deliverability and Impact of the proposed action or approach
- The most effective routes to testing each action and approach, including potential pilot locations in the region

Summary of Proposed Actions:

ACTION 1 Changes to Childminding Models in Rural and Island Communities:	
Short Term	Subsidising existing and new childminders
Long Term	Payment for care of own/family children
ACTION 2 Changes to current rural and Island childcare provision especially childminders, third sector and community providers:	
Short Term	Innovative Solutions to Managerial Expertise
Medium Term	Tailoring the Inspection Approach
Medium Term	Minimum Qualifications for a Rural and Island Staff Bank
ACTION 3 New childcare models for rural localities:	
Medium Term	Single Care Model
Long Term	Rural Childcare (Care) Practitioner
ACTION 4 School (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010	
Medium Term	Amendment to the School (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

ACTION 1a

Changes to Childminding Models in Rural and Island Communities:

SHORT TERM	Existing and new childminders could be given a subsidy to support business viability and thereby provide sustainable local provision and enable population retention and attraction.
Regulatory Position (Ask of CI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Model is within current regulation so no need for further CI involvement other than normal inspection procedures
Focus of Scottish Government (Ask of SG)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support a pilot in at least 4 rural and Island communities with financial support to enable a 35hr week at Real Living Wage for a minimum of 2 years
Progress to Date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> With ADAP funding, Highland Council are scoping the work to develop the business model for a subsidised childminder
Deliverability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential for delivery to retain existing childminders Need to work with local communities who may feel a new childminder is not akin to a full childcare service Promotion, through the SCMA Recruitment Campaign, within the ADAP areas – Innse Gall, NW Highland, Argyll and the Islands Need to consider the place-based approach and delivery through LAs, CALA and other organisations
Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Childcare infrastructure created and/or maintained in a rural and Island community Community can use a childminder as part of their talent retention/attraction ambitions Additional new businesses created and/or sustained within rural areas Working parents able to reach their full economic potential with local all age childcare provided Parents more able to access training or education to increase employment chances
Routes to Testing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing Childminder: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outer Hebrides- Aird /Uist/Tong Inner Moray Firth- Ardersier Lochaber- Arisaig New Childminder: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outer Hebrides - Barra/Pairc/Uist Lochaber – Mallaig, Kinlochleven, Ballachullish Wester Ross- Applecross Shetland- Yell Argyll- Island of Luing NW Highland

Action 1b

Changes to Childminding Models in Rural Communities:

LONG TERM	Childminders to be able to claim for 1140 hours of funded childcare for the care of their own and relatives' children or to be subsidised for their care.
Regulatory Position (Ask of CI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Through ADAP and the subsidised childminder model research, this will investigate the top-level legislative changes needed to enable payment for care of own/family childrenSome flexibility to be considered – also look at ratios which include childminders children even when they are at schoolIdentify if there is risk to quality and safety relating to any required legislative change
Focus of Scottish Government (Ask of SG)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Legislative change to enable payment of funded hours for care of own/family childrenRaise through Scottish Government processes and pilot in 4 rural and Island Communities using the funded hours monies and evaluate impact
Progress to Date	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Raised with Scottish Government. We understand work is ongoing to review definitions and we can support this through the rural and Island economic development lensChildminding is the provision of childcare in a domestic setting and does not include caring for children closely related to you- Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010 Issue raised in Westminster re England CMs
Deliverability	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Legal route for delivery to be establishedPotential to pilot in discreet rural and Island communities to understand the impact and any unforeseen issues before rolling out wider
Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none">This makes childminding more attractive as a career and businessMore opportunity for individuals to consider childminding as a career choiceThe childminders children themselves will not be seeking childcare spaces
Route to Testing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">All Outer Hebrides CommunitiesIsle of SkyeAll Shetland Isles

ACTION 2a

Changes to current rural and Island childcare provision especially childminders, third sector and community providers:

SHORT TERM	The need to look at innovative solutions for childcare managerial expertise in rural communities.
Regulatory Position (Ask of CI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently childcare managers must have or be working towards an appropriate qualification at degree level. Peripatetic management of services are limited to maximum 4 per manager even if the total number of children within those services is small • Each service must have a named manager who physically visits the setting once a week • A tailored approach, including if needed a change in legislation, to balance sustainability of settings when considering management expertise
Focus of Scottish Government (Ask of SG)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support a pilot in at least 2 rural and Island communities, with managerial support delivered as hybrid – a mixture of online and physical visits
Progress to date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raised by communities (Uist) who struggle to recruit staff • Current Care Inspectorate regulations around Management say minimum 1 visit a week if peripatetic
Deliverability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will require CI to support the manager with quality and improvement at a distance and provide alternatives to monitoring and understanding at inspection • Staffing in setting will need additional support and guidance
Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural and island services will be able to operate with a shared remote manager when otherwise they would not be able to open and run • Sustainability of the services will improve as the management costs are decreased
Route to Testing	Outer Hebrides <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outer Hebrides- Barra/Aird/Pairc • Skye- Small Isles, Portree/North Skye, Fas Mor/South Skye • Lochaber – Ardnamurchan • Shetland- Lerwick

ACTION 2b

Changes to current rural and Island childcare provision especially childminders, third sector and community providers:

MEDIUM TERM	To investigate whether there is scope to tailor the approach and timescales with respect to maintaining and testing quality (around registration, buildings, staffing and delivery in settings) to rural and island childcare provision. For childminders, a need to reduce the paperwork, bureaucracy and time taken to become a childminder; and recognise the expectations on childminders own home environment which can impact on their own family life.
Regulatory Position (Ask of CI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support and deliver flexibility in regulations for rural and Island childcare settings Space to Grow & Thrive guidance – CALA had input so does have a recognition of the need for rural and island flexibility in it but needs support to be implemented by Care Inspectorate on the ground including providing good practice examples Empowers CI Inspectors and supporting at all levels
Focus of Scottish Government (Ask of SG)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To support the shift in perceptions of rural and island childcare Recognises the unique environments within rural and island childcare and the need for a place-based approach Support changes in the Care Inspectorate's approach in rural and Island areas, including outdoor settings
Progress to Date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is a Scotland wide issue – however particularly acute in rural and Island communities CALA have had initial positive conversations with CI, following feedback from Island settings particularly around care for 0-3 years (e.g. nappy changing) Raised frequently by communities – urban models not suiting rural and Island needs especially when numbers of children are small and can be shared spaces There are good examples such as in North Highland where an Inspector has taken a pragmatic and place-based approach but this is not uniform
Deliverability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Particularly acute in the region's Island communities (Uist, Mull and Skye) and smaller rural settings based in shared spaces such as community halls
Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cost savings to rural and Island settings by sharing community spaces More childcare business startups and sustainability of existing settings due to less urbanised regulation Creation of community hubs where generations come together to develop community cohesion and understanding
Route to Testing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Outer Hebrides Communities Shetland – Sandwick

Action 2c

Changes to current rural and Island childcare provision especially childminders, third sector and community providers:

MEDIUM TERM	Minimum qualifications for community volunteers to create a flexible regional care staffbank.
Regulatory Position (Ask of CI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Clarification is needed on the status of occasional volunteers when it comes to inspections or SSSC registrations.Similarly, the rules for seasonal workers not having to register for 2 years if working only over the holidays also needs explored and clarified
Focus of Scottish Government (Ask of SG)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">This will take time, but would greatly increase the number of people available to be ready to work in the childcare/care sectorDevelops strong sense of community cohesion and wellbeing
Progress to Date	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Raised and discussed with Scottish Government
Deliverability	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Clarity needed for providers on regulations and guidance for use of volunteers and expectations from SSSC on qualifications and registration
Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Supports the sustainability and resilience of a service, improving the experience for the children and the confidence of parents to take on new or increased employment opportunitiesWill help businesses have the confidence they can deliver the service even if unexpected sickness or absence in the short term
Route to Testing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">All Outer Hebrides CommunitiesInner Moray Firth- Laggan, Newtonmore, Nethy Bridge, Glenmore/Rothiemurchus, Dores, TomatinSkye – BroadfordAll Shetland Isles (West Mainland for testing)

ACTION 3a

New childcare models for rural localities:

MEDIUM TERM	Single Care Model – delivery of integrated adult social care and childcare single service in rural locations which will address care provision across the age spectrum within a rural community where there have been difficulties with recruitment of staff within adult care as well as childcare. Can be community based or as part of intergenerational service.
Regulatory Position (Ask of CI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Currently adult and childcare staff and services have completely different registration, qualification and financial regulations and legislations. Inspections are also separate Regulatory position and ask of both CI and SSSC
Focus of Scottish Government (Ask of SG)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support from Scottish Government for flexibility in regulations required for delivery including identifying a Scottish Government representative to be part of Single Care Model Development group and supporting a “regulatory sandbox” approach
Progress to Date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Single Care Model has wide ranging support and is referenced in Highland Council draft Community Wealth Building Strategy and Delivery Plan. Need regulatory flex across Care Inspectorate, Scottish Social Services Council and Disclosure Scotland ADAP funding, through Highland Council, is supporting this and the Single Care Model Pathfinder group is developing next steps, although ADAP funding is currently only for one year.
Deliverability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can be piloted within a discreet community starting with personal assistant style staff team provide both adult care and school aged childcare. Monitor and see what care needs are being met with that role and which cannot be met due to regulations. Residential setting could be a great option for unsocial/overnight requirements of Healthcare and Hospitality sectors
Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More people across the ages will be able to get a service due to multi skilled staff able to provide both services Better employment opportunities for staff as can be a full time role with more security Less staff needed so current recruitment crisis is lessened Staff have greater satisfaction due to the shared role and this improves retention Adult care staff can access childcare so more people, mainly women, will be able to enter and stay in the work force Realisation of the benefits to all ages from integrated care provision which are well documented
Route to Testing	<p>Care Home Setting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highland - Ullapool Outer Hebrides – Barra/Tarbet

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lochaber- Ardnamurchan (cluster), Mallaig• Skye – Broadford, Portree Day Care (Tigh na Drochaid)• Shetland <p>Community Setting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lochaber- Ardnamurchan• Outer Hebrides – Barra/Tarbet• Skye - Dornie• Argyll and Bute- Cowal
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Action 3b

New childcare models for rural localities:

LONG TERM	Rural and Island Childcare (Care) Practitioner (RCP) – a new model which has the nurturing nature of a childminder but also the ability to deliver childcare within the local community (outwith a domestic setting).
Regulatory Position (Ask of CI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently childminders are registered to provide care in their homes only, while other childcare must be delivered from a registered setting which is geographically tied to one place/building • Regulatory position and ask of CI and SSSC
Focus of Scottish Government (Ask of SG)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legislative change to enable a new model of childcare to be established • Support and perhaps funding from Scottish Government – once a model is ready, to pilot in 4 rural and Island communities
Progress to Date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With ADAP funding, Highland Council are scoping for a feasibility study for a Rural Care Practitioner model. • In England a Childminder can register to spend 100% of time in non-domestic setting – including the Torbay model in Care Home so Intergenerational benefits of care provision realised • SCMA are currently undertaking a survey of their existing childminders/members to find out if there is interest in a model for a childminder working outwith a domestic setting
Deliverability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently nannies can provide a moving service to one family – can this be developed further for a Rural Childcare Practitioner model? • Great option for unsocial/overnight requirements of Healthcare and Hospitality staff within the home of the care user
Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A flexible service that meets the needs of children and parents across a wide area that otherwise could not sustain a provision nor could parents access services • The practitioner has a flexible approach to care that moves with the child/ren and need • The care could be provided by this practitioner in school so supporting a full wrap around day without the need for separate registrations for the breakfast club/after school club – extending the day for the RCP would also support business sustainability, and the aspirations and plans for the extension of Breakfast Clubs' Bright Start Initiative • The Rural Care Practitioner could also provide the care from a care home as an intergenerational service with the multiple benefits of that for the adults and the children as well as supporting reduced costs with a shared service/utilities/ meals
Route to Testing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Outer Hebrides Communities • Skye – Dunvegan, Portree • NW Highland- Kinlochbervie • Shetland – Yell • N.Ayrshire – Isle of Arran

ACTION 4

School (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

MEDIUM TERM	Currently, if a Local Authority wants to close down its own 1140 service and transfer it to a partner provider so the service continues, the Local Authority must go through the Schools Consultation (Scotland) Act and undertake the formal consultation which can take up to 18 months. So any community or provider wishing to take on the service from the Local Authority and continue with childcare with the delivery by a different provider, they can't seamlessly deliver the care to 3-5 year olds and eligible 2s which is a vital part of any community offer that could be all age and all year.
Regulatory Position (Ask of CI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/a at this stage
Focus of Scottish Government (Ask of SG)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support exploration of an amendment that allows for a service to be <i>transferred</i> without having to go through the whole formal and time-consuming Consultation Regulations from Act. This could be just in Rural and Island areas. This also supports provider neutrality – can this be tested?
Progress to Date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This has been raised with Scottish Government, and it has also been suggested it be explored through the Scottish Parliamentary Education committee • <u>Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010</u>
Deliverability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider a variation for the continuation of a service such as ELC which may allow it to be done without legislative change
Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows the continuation of a service and security for working parents of uninterrupted access to childcare
Route to Testing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural and Island primary schools with ELC provision and the future potential to be mothballed.

SECTION 4

CONCLUSION and the RATIONALE for INTERVENTION

The compilation of this Evidence Report has re-enforced the scale, urgency and impact of the childcare crisis facing the Highlands and Islands region. It is impacting negatively across our communities, our population and our economy now, and will continue to do so unless we address the issue.

Whilst the exact nature of the childcare challenge may be different in each community – distance, small numbers of children, business viability, affordability or accessibility, or a combination of these issues – what is clear is that the current models of childcare provision are not meeting the needs of our rural and island communities and population, particularly in terms of Under 2s care and out of school care.

Affordable and accessible childcare provision, with the safety and well-being of the child at the centre of provision, and childcare models which recognise the unique challenges of rural and island settlements, will be critical in retaining and growing the population of our region. It will be critical in helping to transform our economy by allowing our population to reach their full economic potential and contribute fully to the regional economy, and our businesses and industry sectors.

The evidence clearly demonstrates the need for a more flexible approach to childcare in our rural and Island communities and the need for flexibility in the current national models of delivery and/or developing new models of delivery with the desired outcomes being:

1. A place-based approach addressing localised requirements, particularly in those rural and Island communities where childcare needs are not easily met from existing models of childcare. Communities themselves are providing innovative solutions to create a childcare service that meets the specific needs of a community.
2. Identification of solutions to childcare provision to suit individual community childcare needs, encompassing both national and local models of childcare. All will require an innovative and place-based approach by regulatory bodies such as Care Inspectorate to recognise the importance of focussing on the outcome - a resilient flexible quality care service.
3. Grow and sustain a high-quality childcare sector in our rural and Island communities that has dedicated and skilled childcare practitioners that are part of a professional, trusted and confident workforce.
4. A childcare offering in a rural or Island community that enables working families to stay, work and reach their full economic potential.

Childcare and the broader care sector are regularly discussed as important issues at the Convention of the Highlands & Islands - (COHI) and HIREP. Regionally, ideas and solutions are developed in response to the childcare challenge but there remain considerable challenges in moving ideas forward and into implementation due to the current national policies restricting new models for childcare to be piloted and the risk of piloting out with the national policies.

This evidence report recognises that the desired changes and solutions will take time, particularly with legislation and coupled with the lack of public funding it makes finding the solutions that little bit harder. HIE is engaged with all key partners nationally and locally, championing the region and the childcare challenges it faces, and working closely with Scottish Government, CALA (Care and Learning Alliance), SOSCN (Scottish Out of School Care Network), SCMA (Scottish Childminding

Association), COSLA, Care Inspectorate and the HIREP Childcare subgroup to deliver the childcare provision our region so badly needs, and deserves.

We shall continue to work collaboratively with the Scottish Government and all stakeholders to address the childcare challenges in our region, and we believe this Evidence Report and the proposed response set out will be an important and crucial step forward to delivering a place based childcare solution and toolkit that works and delivers for the region, our population and our economy.

Appendix A

KEY PARTNERS

Scottish Government (SG)

Responsible for national policy, committed to identifying, developing and enabling place-based solutions to help navigate the distinct challenges, barriers and opportunities of rural and island communities.

Local Government - Local Authorities (LAs)

There are 7 LAs within the Highlands and Islands, all with rural communities and 6 with Island communities. Local Authorities only have a statutory duty to deliver funded hours for 3-5-year-olds (plus 2-year-olds in certain circumstances) but this is usually 9am to 3pm and term time only (i.e. when a school is open) - some settings in the region are flexible and where possible, wraparound care is provided.

Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE)

HIE is the regional economic and community development agency for the north of Scotland covering 51% of the Scottish landmass and 9% of its population. Our broad remit with supporting community resilience means that we work at a local, regional and national level with childcare – identifying the challenges at a local delivery level to the challenges with regulation and legislation at a national level. Childcare is intrinsic to the region's population ambitions and HIE recognises these challenges through the lens of economic and community development. Working with the region's communities we can gather evidence and potential solutions that communities want to see working for their working families and children. The successful provision of childcare is seen as a strategic issue for HIE.

Highlands and Islands Regional Economic Partnership (HIREP)

HIREP brings together partners including public, private, 3rd sector and academic who are committed to delivering prosperity and opportunity across the region, including tackling access to childcare. Their purpose is to enable inclusive and sustainable economic growth and build resilience throughout the region, by identifying and focussing on areas of joint strategic purpose to provide co-ordinated action in pursuit of regional growth opportunities and to address shared challenges.

Care and Learning Alliance (CALA)

It is vital to have high quality childcare services in our region that nurture and support children and families. This not only allows the region to achieve its ambitions for economic growth but also involves children and families having access to inclusive services that are delivered by a professional, skilled and valued workforce. As the largest childcare and family membership organisation in our region, CALA will be instrumental in supporting the development of childcare in our rural and Island communities.

Care Inspectorate (CI)

The Care Inspectorate regulates and inspects care services to make sure they meet the right standards. It also works with providers to help them improve their service and make sure everyone gets safe, high-quality care that meets their needs. The role of CI is critical if new models of childcare are needed to meet the childcare needs of our rural and Island communities. This will involve utilising their expertise, knowledge and more importantly flexibility of the existing regulations and guidance, to determine if there is a best fit to enable delivery while still ensuring safe, high-quality care is maintained.

COSLA

COSLA's Children and Young People Team leads on education and children's services with a remit that covers most aspects of a child's life from pre-birth through to post 16 education and into the world of work. COSLA's work includes oversight of the statutory Local Authority offering for early years funded hours.

Highlands and Islands Regional Economic Partnership (HIREP) – Childcare REP Group

HIREP recognises that childcare is critical for the retention of the population across the region, and our ability to attract people here. Providing childcare in rural locations is particularly challenging and current national policy is often not fit-for-purpose in ensuring a sustainable, responsive provision in certain places. The Childcare REP Sub-Group has representation from all the region's LAs, HIE, CALA, Scottish out of School Care Network (SOSCN) and the Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA).

Scottish Islands Federation (SIF)

SIF provides a conduit to make sure there is a strong island voice and perspective in policy and decision-making ensuring Island communities have a voice on challenges such as childcare.

Appendix B

Childcare, Highlands and Islands Enterprise

Breakdown of communities experiencing difficulties in accessing childcare

February 2025

The following is a geographical breakdown, covering 111 rural and Island communities, of the anecdotal information that has been gathered from engagement between HIE, our Area Teams and our local communities. The RAG has been chosen to demonstrate the availability (or lack) of childcare in these communities and the impact on working families and businesses. Where possible, we have cross referenced with the Care Inspectorate website and certain assumptions and judgements have been made.

CHALLENGES

	no or very limited childcare
	limited childcare
	available, but fragile

CHILDCARE	ELC	Comments
Shetland		Early Adopters Pilot <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Long standing issues around childcare in Shetland• Targeting North Isles and West Mainland• Addressing informal care and lack of regulated care
Gott		Y New Childminder who unfortunately has closed the business
Yell		Y No childcare available. ELC setting in Mid-Yell take paid-places for 2 year olds.
Hamnavoe		Y New childminder identified by SCMA – early adopter community funding used to provide grant
Unst		Y No childcare available. ELC setting in Baltasound take paid-places for 2 year olds.
Walls		Y No regulated childcare. Unregulated school-aged childcare has been established through the Early Adopter Communities Project but is fragile.
Sandness		N No regulated childcare or childminders.
Nesting		N No regulated childcare or childminders. Strong community.
Brae		Y School-aged childcare service offered within the school for a small number of children

Mossbank		Y	School operates unregulated out of school care, and ELC takes 2 year olds.
Lerwick		Y	School aged childcare and private provider available for younger children. At capacity.
Aith		Y	No childcare available.
Orkney			<p>Lack of regulated care and waiting lists for unregulated care, lots of informal care</p> <p>Lack of Out of School Care</p> <p>Concentration of childcare is provided in the main town (almost 50% of childminders are based in Kirkwall) - not necessarily a viable option for parents in the outlying areas of Orkney Mainland and certainly not the Isles</p> <p>Childminders Settings Information Table.pdf (orkney.gov.uk)</p>
Orphir		Y	New Childminder, lack of out of school care
Sanday		Y	Childminder recruited but did not continue with the business, lack of out of school care
Kirkwall		Y	New Childminder and new nursery setting for Kirkwall currently being procured (replacing a nursery) – current market saturated with waiting lists
Holm		Y	New Childminder recruited but did not continue with the business, lack of out of school care
Stromness		Y	1 childminder with significant waiting list, lack of out of school care
HIGHLAND			<p>ADAP bid successful:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • research into rural care practitioner model • feasibility study into models of international integrated care linked to the developing Single Care Model • business modelling a subsidised childminder
CAITHNESS AND SUTHERLAND			
Kinlochbervie		Y	ELC setting re-opened, no childminders or out of school care – businesses struggling to recruit staff due to lack of childcare. Plans for community run School Aged Childcare service from preschool building (unregistered)
Durness		Y	No childminders or out of school care
Melvich		Y	No childminders or out of school care
Tongue		Y	No childminder, no out of school care
Bettyhill		Y	Potential new childminder (not yet registered), no out of school care
Dunbeath		Y	ELC Setting reopened this session 24/25 but fragile due to low numbers. No childminder
Brora		Y	New childminder and a third sector nursery. Local Authority ELC service operating within the school. School Age Childcare service offered by Sutherland Stepping Stones from within their own ELC setting - this is under threat of closure
Melness			No childminder or out of school care
Dounreay			Lack of full time childcare affecting the Dounreay workforce and ability to reach full economic potential – limited out of school care
Gledfield		N	2 childminders registered with CI in Ardgay – ELC setting currently mothballed – they are liaising with the community

Achiltibuie	Red	Y	New childminder withdrawn and no longer operating
Laig	Green	Y	New childminder
Wick	Yellow	Y	Potential new childminder, limited out of school care
Thurso	Yellow	Y	Potential new childminder, limited out of school care
Scourie	Red	Y	No Childminder or out of school provision
Lochinver	Red		No childminder or out of school provision
SKYE and LOCHALSH			
Portree (Skye)	Red	Y	No childminders on the Isle of Skye, unregulated out of school care, Portree Nursery expanding into regulated out of school care
Kyle of Lochalsh	Yellow	Y	New childminder – business has now closed, no out of school care
Broadford	Yellow	Y	Outdoor learning programme providing after school and holiday care available for 5 – 16 year olds
Dunvegan	Red	Y	Unregulated childcare available – Community Trust investing in a new nursery but major hurdles with CI
Dornie	Red		Currently no childcare provision – community trust looking at demand for Gaelic nursery provision
Small Isles and Knoydart	Red	Y	ELC available but no other childcare provision available
Isle of Raasay	Red	Y	Nursery provision but no 0-2 year old provision or out of school care
Sleat	Yellow	Y	FAS Mor GM nursery provision. No afterschool? 0-2?
Staffin	Yellow	Y	GM Nursery. No other provision. Recently occupied community housing.
Uig/Kilmuir	Yellow	Y	GM Nursery in Kilmuir only. No other provision.
Edinbane	Yellow	Y	Nursery provision. No other provision.
Minginish	Yellow	Y	Carbost Nursery. No other provision.
Kyleakin	Yellow	Y	Nursery provision. No other provision. Lots new housing
Elgol	Red	N	No childcare available
WESTER ROSS			
Applecross	Red	Y	Family with 3 under 3s just about to leave as no childcare available - no formal or informal childcare available
Ullapool	Red	Y	2 new childminders, no out of school care – various attempts to start up but lack of qualified staff preventing this
Plockton	Red	Y	No childminders or out of school provision
Glenelg	Red	N	No childcare provision for 0 -2 year olds and no school age childcare

Lochcarron	Yellow	Y	Nursery provision but no 0-2 provision. No afterschool provision. Planning consent for new housing
Auchtertyre	Yellow	Y	Nursery provision but no 0-2 provision. No afterschool provision.
Shieldaig/Kinlochewe	Yellow	Y	Nursery Provision. After school activities and holiday sessions being explored with Highlife Highland and Shieldaig/Gairloch schools. Transport issue.
Gairloch	Yellow	Y	Nursery provision.
LOCHABER			
Fort William	Yellow	Y	Saturated market place, waiting lists for most providers of childcare
Arisaig	Red	Y	Childminder – not commissioned and fragile due to lack of business sustainability
Ardnamurchan	Red	Y	Childcare survey currently being undertaken across the peninsula by Ardnamurchan Community Trust
Strontian	Red	Y	No childminders or out of school care
Acharacle	Red	Y	Childminder no longer in business and no out of school care available
Kinlochleven	Yellow	Y	Nursery provision but no 0-2 provision. No afterschool provision.
Mallaig	Yellow	Y	Nursery provision but no 0-2 provision. No afterschool provision.
Ballachulish/Glencoe/Onich	Yellow	Y	Nursery provision (except Glencoe) but no 0-2 provision. No afterschool provision.
Lochaline	Yellow	Y	Covered by Ardnamurchan research? Distance issues. Planning consent for 10 family homes.
Kilchoan	Yellow	Y	Covered by Ardnamurchan research? Distance issues
Invergarry	Yellow	Y	Nursery provision but no 0-2 provision. No afterschool provision. Early stages Housing plans within and outwith village centre.
INNER MORAY FIRTH			
Inverness	Green	Y	Saturated market place, waiting lists for most childcare providers, dialogue with Green Freeport have began, SFA Extra Time delivered in 3 primary schools
Ardersier	Yellow	Y	New childminder, no out of school care – children can access School Aged Childcare at Croy Primary School by taxi
Stratherrick/Foyers	Red	Y	No childminders or out of school care
Croy	Yellow	Y	Out of school care delivered by third sector provider which is also open to primary schools in the catchment (Ardersier) - at full capacity!
Nairn	Yellow	Y	New Childminder – now closed for business
Maryburgh	Green	Y	New childminder
Muir of Ord	Green	Y	New Childminder
Kingussie	Green	Y	New Childminder

Beauly	Yellow	Y	New Childminder – closure in 2023 of a private 0-5 year old nursery setting
Fortrose	Green	Y	New Childminder
Laggan	Red	N	No childminders or out of school provision
Tomatin	Red	Y	No childminders or out of school provision
OUTER HEBRIDES			Nursery addresses & Tel nos - Public.xls (scot.nhs.uk)
Stornoway	Yellow	Y	Closure of An Cotan, lack of interest from NHS Western Isles to take over the nursery service, new childminder recruited, saturated market. Continued demand and rise in numbers
Pairc	Red	Y	Closure of Hebridean Childcare and no out of school care
Aird	Green		One new childminder resulting in limited availability and parents having to source outwith their residing area.
Tong	Yellow	Y	New Childminder, Term time out of school care only
Tarbet	Red	Y	No childminders, all year out of school care
Uist	Yellow	Y	Only one childminder. Little availability for 0-2 year olds and wraparound childcare is seriously lacking across all ages. A new outdoor childcare setting at early stages of progress – lack of out of school care
Barra	Red	Y	There is currently no provision within Barra for 0-2 year olds and only one setting which offers pre school provision. This has resulted in next to no availability. There is no childminders on Barra. People leaving (police) and unable to return to work (school)
ARGYLL AND ISLANDS			
Tiree	Red	Y	Currently limited childcare available, there is a new childminder, Community Trust developing 0-12 provision (early stages)
Luing			Currently no childcare, framework to develop new jobs on the Island, interest in childminding but not currently viable
Coll	Red	Y	Currently no childcare, interest in childminding but not currently viable
Gigha	Red	Y	No childminders, no out of school care
Colonsay	Red	Y	No childminders, no out of school care
Islay	Yellow	Y	Childminders on the Island and plans to develop a new outdoor childcare setting
Tobermory/Mull	Green	Y	New childminders recruited
Iona	Red	Y	No childminders, no out of school care
Bute	Yellow	Y	New childminder recruited but limited after school care
Jura	Red	Y	No childminder or out of school care
Benderloch	Red	Y	New childminder recruited and then withdrew
Oban	Yellow	Y	New childminders recruited and then withdrew
Campbeltown	Yellow	Y	New childminders recruited

Cowal		Y	Lack of childminders in this area
NORTH AYRSHIRE			
Rosneath Peninsula		Y	New childminder recruited
Arran and Cumbrae		Y	New childminders recruited
MORAY			
Elgin		Y	Saturated market place with waiting lists for most childcare providers. Impacting businesses and RAF Lossiemouth, new childminders recruited, SFA engaged with Elgin City
Forres		Y	New Childminder and no out of school care. Particular pressure from MOD around Kinloss effecting operations, no holiday provision
Lossiemouth		Y	Waiting lists with childminders and RAF Nursery. There is some out of school care with spaces available and some holiday provision
Buckie		Y	New childminder, lack of out of school care and no holiday provision
Aberlour		Y	New Childminder, lack of out of school care
Duffus			New Childminder, lack of out of school care
Elgin North (Academy)		Y	Some out of School Care and some holiday provision
Elgin South (High School)		Y	Some out of School Care and some holiday provision
Speyside		Y	No out of school care, no holiday provision
Milnes		Y	Some out of school care, no holiday provision
Keith		Y	Some out of school care, no holiday provision

Appendix C

Scottish Childminding Association Recruitment Campaign – ACTIVE AND REGISTERED

Childminders Recruited in authorities funded by Highlands & Islands Enterprise (2022 - 2025)

Local Authority	Community	Status
Argyll & Bute	Tobermory 1	Active
	Tobermory 2	Active
	Campbeltown 1	Closed
	Campbeltown 2	Active
	Rothesay	Awaiting registration certificate
	Rothesay	Active
Highland Council	Ardersier	Active
	Achiltibuie	Closed
	Croy	Active
	Maryburgh, Dingwall	Active
	Kyle of Lochalsh	Closed
	Ardgay	Active
	Beauly	Active
	Morefield, Ullapool	Active
	Fort William	Closed
	Muir of Ord	Active
	Kingussie	Active
	Fortrose	Active
Highland Council	Nairn	Closed
	Bettyhill	On programme currently
	Ullapool	Closed
	Ballachulish	On programme currently

Local Authority	Community	Status
Moray Council	Buckie	Active
	Fochabers	Closed
	Elgin	Active
	Aberlour	Active
	Aberlour	Active
	Forres	Active
	Elgin	Active
	Elgin	Active
	Duffus, Elgin	Active
	Forres	Registered & accessing grant
North Ayrshire Council	Rothes	On programme currently
	Fochabers	On programme currently
Orkney Islands Council	Lamlash, Isle of Arran	Closed
Orkney Islands Council	Orphir	Active
	Sanday	Closed
	Kirkwall	Closed
	Harriay	Closed
	Holm	Closed
Shetland Islands Council	Gott	Closed
	Scalloway	Registered & accessing grant
Western Isles	Aird, Isle of Lewis	Active
	Aird, Isle of Lewis	Registered & accessing grant
	Isle of Lewis	Closed
	Isle of Barra	On programme currently
	Garyvard, Isle of Lewis	On programme currently
	Stornoway, Isle of Lewis	On programme currently

Scottish Childminding Association Recruitment Campaign – FUNDED ALTERNATIVELY

Childminders Recruited in authorities of interest to HIE but funded separately

Local Authority	Community	Status
Argyll & Bute Council	Dunoon	Registered & accessing grant
	Isle of Tiree	Active
	Tighnabruaich	On programme currently
	Isle Of Islay	Awaiting registration certificate
	Dunoon	Active
	Dunoon	On programme currently
	Oban	On programme currently
	Dunoon	Active
	Benderloch by Oban	On programme currently
Highland Council	Helensburgh	Registered & accessing grant
	Thurso	Active
	Lairg	Active
	Wick	Registered & accessing grant
	Thurso	Awaiting registration certificate
	Helmsdale	Awaiting registration certificate

Location of candidates who did not continue after completing Induction

Local Authority	Community	Note
Argyll & Bute	Tobermory Campbeltown Campbeltown Campbeltown Isle of Islay	since recruited in this location since recruited in this location since recruited in this location since recruited in this location since recruited in this location
Highland	Fortrose Achiltibuie Beaul Helmsdale North Kessock Aviemore Dingwall Conon Bridge Wick Thurso Brora Ardgay	since recruited in this location since recruited in this location since recruited in this location since recruited in this location since recruited in this location since recruited in this location
Moray	Portknockie Findochty Buckie Elgin Duffus, Elgin Elgin Arradoul Buckie	since recruited in this location since recruited in this location since recruited in this location

	Newton	
North Ayrshire	Whiting Bay, Isle of Arran	
Orkney	Harray Kirkwall Kirkwall	
Shetland	Yell island Wethersta	
Western Isles	Isle of Barra Isle of Uist	since recruited in this location