

Mr James Dornan
Convenor
Education and Skills Committee
Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

29 March 2018

Dear Convenor

Early learning and childcare - additional information

As part of the committee's briefing on the *Early learning and childcare* audit report on 21 March 2018, a query was raised on the breakdown of administration staff included in councils' workforce projections for the expansion to 1,140 hours of funded early learning and childcare.

We agreed to provide the committee with further information on this, which is set out in the appendix to this letter.

I hope this is useful and I would be happy to provide any further information that I can.

Yours sincerely



Caroline Gardner
Auditor General for Scotland

APPENDIX

Early learning and childcare: Additional information from Audit Scotland

At the meeting of the Education and Skills Committee on 21 March 2018, the Auditor General briefed members on her report on *Early learning and childcare*. Audit Scotland agreed to provide additional information on the breakdown of administration staff included in council workforce projections. We are aware that the Scottish Government and councils are working together to revise the initial expansion plans and councils have recently submitted updated information to the Scottish Government. As we highlighted at our evidence session on the 21 March 2018, the Scottish Government may be able to provide the committee with a more up-to-date position on the workforce projections than those contained in our *Early learning and childcare* report which are based on councils' initial plans which were submitted to the Scottish Government in September 2017.

As noted in paragraph 84 of our report, the Scottish Government has estimated that between about 6,000 and 8,000 whole-time equivalent (WTE) additional staff will be needed to deliver the expansion to 1,140 hours of funded early learning and childcare by 2020. Councils' expansion plans show an estimated increase of over 12,000 additional WTE staff by 2021/22 including staff in training and central staff. The report caveats the 12,000 figure as a potential overestimate, due to missing baseline information for three councils.

As we noted in our evidence to the committee on the 21 March 2018, councils and the Scottish Government have taken different approaches to modelling the workforce. The Scottish Government has taken a zero based approach. This models the numbers needed to deliver the 1,140 expansion, based on the hours expected to be delivered through the expansion, assuming that both existing and new members of staff will operate at the same capacity. Councils' approaches to modelling were not always explicit in their initial expansion plans, but it appears that existing workforce models have been adjusted to accommodate the additional hours and any necessary changes to the staffing ratio.

Councils' estimates include a broader range of staff, including staff that they plan to employ centrally. Our information, based on our review of expansion plans prepared by councils and submitted to the Scottish Government in September 2017, shows that central staff account for just over 350 WTE of the over 12,000 additional staff councils have estimated they require. This includes central teachers for quality assurance and improvement support, as well as managers and other centrally employed staff. Councils also estimate the expansion to 1,140 hours will require an increase of around 290 WTE administration and auxiliary staff in councils' early learning and childcare settings. Similar to the overall council estimate, these increases may be overestimates due to missing baseline information.