



5 NATIONS ANNUAL EARLY YEARS SUMMIT

Report from the Summit held
at Glasgow City Chambers
on 23 August 2018
Hosted by Early Years Scotland



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Introduction

Early Years Scotland (EYS) hosted the inaugural *5 Nations Annual Early Years Summit* in the City Chambers in Glasgow. Glasgow City Council very kindly gifted us this prestigious venue to host the first ELC Summit. We are delighted with the agreement that this will now become a significant annual event.

Across the United Kingdom and Ireland, early childhood provision is diverse, in large part to the devolution of powers across the nations of the United Kingdom. Each nation operates independently, within the remit of their individual policy, guidance and curricula to shape their early childhood education and care agenda, which results in commonalities as well as major differences in provision across the nations.

Despite the close borders, until now, there has been little attempt to compile a picture of common challenges, dilemmas and areas of concern across the United Kingdom and Ireland. Similarly, strengths of each nation are largely protected by home nations. In order to meet the best interests of the United Kingdom and Ireland's youngest citizens, there was a desire, and continues to be, for more collaborative working across borders.

This report documents the key discussions that took place in this meeting in Glasgow on 23 August 2018. Details are also provided of the agreed action points to progress this partnership working, including the decision to hold the summit on an annual basis, with each nation hosting in turn.



Members in Attendance

A full day's discussion took place at the City Chambers in Glasgow with representation from each Nation as detailed in *Table 1* below.

<i>Organisation/Nation</i>	<i>Participant</i>	<i>Position</i>
<i>Early Childhood Ireland</i>	Teresa Heeney	CEO
	Frances Byrne	Director of Policy and Advocacy
<i>Early Years Northern Ireland</i>	Dr Siobhan Fitzpatrick	CEO
	Pauline Walmsley	Deputy CEO
<i>Early Years Scotland</i>	Barbara Dale	Chair of Board of Directors
	Jean Carwood-Edwards	CEO
	Jane Brumpton	Depute CEO
	Linda Bruce	PA to Chief Executive (Note-taker)
	Kenny Forsyth	Consultant
<i>Pre-school Learning Alliance (England)</i>	Neil Leitch	CEO
<i>Wales PPA</i>	Jane Alexander	CEO
	Maggie Kelly	National Development Manager
<i>Scottish Government</i>	Euan Carmichael	Team Leader, Service Models
	Liz Levy	Quality – Early Learning and Childcare
<i>Glasgow City Council</i>	David McLelland	Head of Service Development
	Heather Douglas	Early Years Manager

Welcome and Introductions

A warm welcome was offered by Jean Carwood-Edwards and the Early Years Scotland team, and Jean thanked everyone for travelling to Scotland for the first meeting. The meeting was launched with a viewing of the recently composed musical collaboration film, between children from the Early Years Scotland's 2 Stay Play and Learn service and Chesters Nursery in Drumchapel Glasgow, and leading Scottish musicians Chris Stout and Catriona Mackay. The young children involved were engaged in a process of composing music, writing lyrics and then later performing the finished musical composition at a Ministerial Event at the Scottish Parliament where the Minister for Childcare and Early Years dedicated the music to all of Scotland's children. The musical arrangement and performance, [Believe in Me](#) is available on the Early Years Scotland website.

Following this uplifting welcome, each Nation introduced the current position of early childhood education and care in their context. Despite a timed agenda, which aimed to direct the discussions by allocating a specific timeslot to each nation, the participants embraced a naturalistic dialogue and a flexible structure to the day. This allowed the most prominent issues, challenges and commonalities across nations to come to the fore.

Five Nations' Positions on Early Childhood Provision:

Throughout the event, it quickly became apparent that there was disparity of provision, support, and experiences of children across the five nations. In some instances, there were real common strengths across the nations as each country representative demonstrated a key interest, desire and drive to provide the best possible start to life for their youngest citizen, in much the same way that Scotland vows to make Scotland the 'best place to grow up' (Scottish Government, 2013). In some cases, the drive and ambitions to support children by the charities in attendance were met with structural challenges at a country specific level, which resulted in areas of concern or worry in relation to the experiences the children received.

Each charity offered unique and tailored opportunities to support the community, families and the early years industry, depending upon their membership composition; a composition that for many was rapidly evolving and progressing. This provision was often driven by government policy, the current early childhood offering available in their context, as well as the professional learning needs and interests of their members.

Please see *Table 2* below, which provides an overview of the approaches employed in each partner organisation in attendance.



Nation/ Organisation	Membership	Organisational Remit	Government/Policy	Current Offering	Qualifications and Training
Republic of Ireland/ Early Childhood Ireland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service Providers Membership, • School Aged Childcare Membership, • Parent and Toddler Membership, • Organisational Membership, • Associate Membership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renewed focus on organisational infrastructure support around developing professional standards, with a new future focused outlook. • Reduced focus on practitioner training. • Focus on EU projects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recent increased investment in early childhood education • The Early Years Guarantee is being introduced. • Early Childhood Ireland contribute to 40 policy documents • No professional standards available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 hours per week, over 78 weeks (2 years entitlement) 	Practitioners receive 3 days paid CPD annually
Scotland/ Early Years Scotland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ELC Voluntary Providers • ELC Local Authority Providers • ELC Private Providers • Childminders • Primary Schools • Colleges • Universities • Students and Individual Practitioners • Parent and Toddler Groups 	<p>4 key strands of the organisation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Membership Services • Delivery of Services with Children and Families • EYS Professional Learning Academy • Policy/Advocacy services <p>Increased focus on training with the launch of the Professional Learning Academy.</p> <p>Increased focus on EYS Stay Play and Learn services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Separate Early Learning and Childcare Directorate created within Government • ELC National Standard introduced to which all funded providers must adhere • Quality Action Plan developed to underpin the 2020 early years expansion to 1140 hours for all 3 and 4 year olds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current offer: 15 hours per week for 3 and 4 year olds and eligible 2s. • Offer doubling in 2020 to 30 hours per week universal entitlement for all 3 and 4 year olds and eligible 2s. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All staff must be qualified (or working towards qualification) and eligible to register with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) • All managers of ELC settings must be qualified to degree level (or working towards degree level qualification)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organisations <p><i>(Over recent years there has been a decrease in voluntary provider membership and in increase in private provider membership.)</i></p>	within primary, nurseries and prisons.	and eligible 2 year olds		
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> £1bn funding allocated to Early Learning and Childcare from 2020 National recruitment campaign to attract up to 11,000 new entrants to the workforce. 		
England/ PPA Preschool Learning Alliance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early Year Setting Baby and Toddler Group Childminders Students and Individual School Corporate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offering information and advice Produce specialist publications Training and development schemes Advocate around early years policy and practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Back to work focus, provision focused on supporting working parents. Testing culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30 hours per week over 38 weeks for eligible children Back to work offering for parents rather than a universal provision for children's welfare 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apprenticeship Model, HE Training and Degree Level.
Wales PPA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Playgroup Toddler Group Full Day Care Childminder Out of School Childcare Club Crèche Individual 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support members to encourage discussion about early years services provide updates about legal requirements Support sustainability of businesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service models devolved to local authorities but Government policy directing funding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Universal 10 hours per week minimum, across 3 terms. Additional 20 hours for 	<p>Currently: CCLD (Children's Care Learning and Development) level 3 for Leaders and level 2 for practitioners</p> <p>Managers require CCLD level 5</p> <p>From September 2019, the new CCPLD, (Children's Care Play, Learning and Development) will be available</p>

	Overall increase in independent providers and childminders at present.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide targeted one to one support • Share news about the early years sector • Signpost to qualifications and training opportunities to improve quality 		eligible children	Qualifications are delivered as standalone qualifications and also as part of Apprenticeships packages
N.Ireland./ Early Years N.Ireland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual Membership • Organisational Membership • Parent and Toddler Groups • Playgroups • Crèche • After school club • 2 year group • Day care • Nursery <p>75% 'Community Voluntary'</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on children; parents and families; and children in their local communities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Childcare Strategy has now been redeveloped as <i>Early Learning and Development and Play Strategy</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entitlement to 475 hours of funded hours annually • Working towards a universal daily 4 hour entitlement for all children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level 5 and Early Years degree for those leading preschool educational services.



Opportunities and Challenges across Nations

The member nations explained how they all supported the children of their country in the best ways possible. In some instances, the children were receiving the support from local government and local authorities, and real opportunities were present in the provision. Yet in other cases, these opportunities were somewhat ideological and in reality significant challenges emerged.

The role of the charities involved in the Five Nations Summit was to advocate on behalf of their children and families, and to support practitioners and educators in the field of early years. Across the full day discussion, lively and engaged dialogue was evident, which not only set out to describe the strengths of each nation, but also to highlight those areas where ideological aspirations have fallen short, and ultimately are impacting negatively on the industry and our youngest children.

Scottish Government colleagues then gave a very informative presentation summarising the current landscape within Scotland, and gave a clear outline of the benefits of the policy for funded provision within Scotland, including potential barriers.

Glasgow City Council colleagues were also invited to attend, and this gave participants the opportunity to hear a local update from a Scottish local authority perspective. This presentation provided a very helpful example of how Scotland's largest local authority supports Glasgow's youngest children through a variety of approaches.

Across the organisations, there was great commonality with regard to opportunities and challenges, and discussions centred mainly around:

- 1. The degree of funded early learning and childcare available across nations;**
- 2. Challenges in staff recruitment in the early childhood sector due to the paradox between high level qualification aspirations and industry pay levels; and**
- 3. The diversification of charities' membership and the need to provide new tailored support and membership options.**

The Offer (Availability of funded Early Learning and Childcare)

Each nation demonstrated a commitment to early learning and childcare through funded early years provision for, at very least, eligible children in their context. The extent of this commitment varied across countries, with some government initiatives striving to provide universal funded provision for all children aged 3 and 4 years, across the majority of the week (such as Scotland, who have committed to offering 30 hours of universal funding by 2020). Currently, as can be seen in *table 2*, other nations are offering more limited funding, in terms of hours, or eligibility of children. The drivers behind government funding differed across countries, with some presenting a rationale for children needing increased education and support in the early years, while other nations were clear that the government agenda was driven by *back to work* initiatives, rather than educational needs of children.

Irrespective of the extent of funded early learning and childcare from the perspective of children's experience, from an infrastructure perspective, the system was still fraught with challenges. For example, those nations that have already extended the funded offer, such as England, are now experiencing significant dilemmas in terms of running costs for individual early learning and childcare providers. In many cases, centres are closing as a result of the expansion, and while the offering should be free at the point of delivery, in many cases, centres are requiring to top-up their fees with charges for lunches or snacks in order to be sustainable. In England, for example, 4 in 10

Service Providers now charge additional fees. In many cases, those who have not charged fees, have had to close, as the provision has become unsustainable in terms of a business model.

In some nations, funding is tied to partnership agreements with local authorities. These agreements include targets which must be met by the providers. In Wales for example, the funding was associated with 'care' versus 'education' and different pots of money associated with each (10 hours funding for care and an additional 20 hours for education). In many cases, providers opted to only offer the 10 hours of 'care' provision because it was less regulated and less complicated than offering the additional 20 hours of 'education'. This raises questions about quality and about whether children are experiencing the best opportunities in their provision.

Early Childhood Education Recruitment and Pay:

In relatively recent times the recognition of early childhood education as fundamental to children's outcomes later in life (e.g. from work like Sylva et al, 2004) has driven an expansion of funded early learning and childcare provision across the five nations.

With the expanding industry, which is set to continue into 2020 and beyond, there is a need to recruit new practitioners, including teachers, to meet the demand. For example, it was highlighted at the Summit that the Scottish Government is seeking to recruit up to 11000 new qualified staff by 2020, and much of this work has been tasked to local authorities.

Yet it is recognised that high quality pedagogy is fundamental to outcomes of young children, thus recruitment of new staff within the industry must be done in a manner that maintains or exceeds current standards. This challenge is compounded by the perpetually low wages within the industry, which means that it is difficult to meet recruitment demands to the standard required in the industry.

In line with many European countries, there is a drive by some to create early childhood education as a degree level profession, yet the pay and conditions do not match the *Initial Teacher Education* counterparts. This causes most frustration and resistance amongst practitioners. The disparity between pay and qualifications was highlighted as an issue that causes challenges to recruitment.

Membership Profile for the Organisations within the 5 Nations

The member organisations talked about the challenges they face when supporting their members. With the early years expansion across the sector, and the increased accountability on service providers, new markets are emerging. For example, childminders have increased in terms of the level of funded provision they provide, and those in this industry are looking to the five nation charities for membership opportunities and support. The participating charities highlighted the need to diversify their membership offering to suit the changes in the sector, but also to consider where training / professional learning provision and resources are required for this changing landscape.



Conclusions, Recommendations and Action Points

The intention of the event was to foster closer working relationships and collaborative partnerships across the five nations, with the view to supporting young children throughout the UK and Ireland to experience high quality early childhood learning experiences. In order to achieve this, and to create an ongoing collaborative learning community across the nations, it was agreed that we would undertake the following actions and recommendations:

1. Create a forum to enable discussion and document-sharing electronically, by all nations. In particular we will share knowledge in relation to:
 - a. Evidence base on the positive difference early intervention makes for young children;
 - b. Discussion of member benefits for childminders
 - c. Recommendations for future conference speakers
2. The *Five Nations Annual Early Years Summit* will become an important and collaborative opportunity. Wales PPA will host the 2019 *Five Nations Annual Early Years Summit*, with other nations contributing in future years on a rolling basis each year in August.
3. In terms of an initial planned collaborative project, it was agreed that the five nations will prepare a collective *position statement* on the 30th anniversary of the UNCRC, focusing on No. 7 *Implementing child rights in early childhood*. This position statement will be created and agreed in 2019 to align with the 30th anniversary. Coordinating the project will be led by Dr Siobhan Fitzpatrick, CEO, Early Years Northern Ireland.

Further Information

1. For further details about the event, please contact Early Years Scotland on: info@earlyyearsscotland.org
2. Charity Websites:
 - [Early Years Scotland](#)
 - [Early Years Northern Ireland](#)
 - [Wales Pre-school Play Association](#)
 - [Early Childhood Ireland](#)
 - [Pre-School Learning Alliance, England](#)

Forthcoming Events

- Early Years Northern Ireland Leadership and Governance Conference 23 November 2018
- The Early Childhood Ireland conference is being held on 12 and 13 April 2019
- Professional Development Conference 7 June 2019
- Early Years Scotland Annual National Conference 14 September 2019

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Early Years Scotland

21-23 Granville Street, Glasgow G3 7EE

Tel: 0141 221 4148 Fax: 0141 221 6043 Email: info@earlyyearsscotland.org

earlyyearsscotland.org

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