

PE2112/M: Conduct an independent review of childcare costs and availability in Scotland

Tim Eagle MSP written submission, 10 September 2025

As I am more than aware through local people who have contacted me childcare in Scotland is reaching a critical tipping point, and this petition—calling for an independent review of publicly-funded early learning and childcare—is vital.

In the Highlands and Islands, legitimate unique challenges—such as sparse population, geographic isolation, and limited local childcare provision—only exacerbate the pressures faced by many and I recognise the challenges that parents face more widely across Scotland . Parents in the constituencies I cover often travel long distances to access nurseries, and available services may operate irregular hours or at limited capacity, further straining families' ability to balance work and care responsibilities.

Without intervention, families—particularly single-parent households or lower-income households—face very difficult choices between financial stability and essential caregiving responsibilities.

An independent review, as proposed in this petition, would shine a light on not just regional differences and needs but help identify root causes that cause difficulties. This will allow much needed informed discussion on flexible wrap-around care, and how high costs deter workforce participation, hurting economic development and threatening community resilience.

I continue to express my full support for this petition and all the work that is being done by Pregnant then Screwed knowing that a review will help ensure that families across the Highlands and Islands and across Scotland have accessible, dependable, and sustainable childcare options that support both work and family life, so all can thrive economically and socially.

I urge the committee to push for a full debate on this topic and for the government to carry out the much needed review, knowing a debate in chamber will allow more voices to share the concerns being felt across the country.

Yours sincerely,

Tim Eagle MSP

Member of the Scottish Parliament

Highlands and Islands Region