

Minister for Children, Young People and The Promise
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Education, Children and Young People Committee
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30 May 2025

Dear Convener,

Sustainable Rates Review Implementation: funded ELC cost survey

I am writing to update the Committee on the delivery of a key commitment from the 2023 joint Scottish Government and CoSLA Sustainable Rates Review – a new national cost collection survey to improve the data available to inform funded early learning and childcare (ELC) rates-setting by local authorities.

The Diffley Partnership have been appointed to design and deliver a national funded ELC cost survey and have worked closely with providers to learn lessons from previous data collection exercises. I am pleased to update the Committee that the survey for childcare providers in the private, third and childminding sectors who deliver funded ELC launched on Thursday 29 May. The survey will remain open until Wednesday 2 July, providing a 5-week window for responses to encourage and provide opportunity for as many providers as possible to participate.

I would like to emphasise that all responses will remain strictly confidential and will not be seen by anyone outside of the Diffley Partnership. The information that local authorities, the Scottish Government and COSLA receive will be aggregated results which are anonymised and non-disclosive.

The Sustainable Rates Review was clear that rates-setting needs to be strengthened to ensure that providers receive rates for the delivery of funded ELC which are set at levels that support long-term sustainability. This requires local authorities to be able to draw on robust and reliable information to inform local sustainable rate setting. I therefore hope that as many funded ELC providers as possible will participate in the survey over the next 5 weeks.

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Providers will receive links to the appropriate survey from the Diffley Partnership directly, along with information about the support available to those taking part.

The information from the survey will inform the future sustainable rates set by local authorities, including the development of new guidance, and will help to inform the Scottish Government and COSLA's future financial planning. I will update the Committee further once survey findings are available later in the year.

I am hugely grateful to all those providers and representative groups who have supported the development of the survey, including through participation in provider reference groups, an intensive pilot phase featuring iterative testing with providers, and ongoing oversight from the Sustainable Rates Review Implementation Working Group (SRRIWG).

Yours sincerely,

Natalie Don-Innes MSP
Minister for Children, Young People and The Promise

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