

The image is a vertical collage. On the left, a woman with dark hair is smiling warmly at the camera. In the center, a semi-transparent grey vertical bar contains the text 'Childcare - Time to deliver for working families' in a bold, red, sans-serif font. On the right, a young child in a blue and white striped shirt is looking towards the camera, and another child is seen from the side, holding a red magnifying glass over their face. The background consists of bright green and orange geometric shapes, suggesting a playful, educational environment.

**Childcare**  
**-**  
**Time**  
**to**  
**deliver**  
**for**  
**working**  
**families**

**The price of publicly provided school holiday childcare in Scotland is the highest in Britain; and as expensive as heating, eating and rent combined.**

- The average single parent in Scotland will spend £110.93 a week, or almost 20% of their income, on holiday childcare for each child. (1)(2)
- The average couple with two children will spend 30% of their income on holiday childcare. (3)
- The price of one week's holiday childcare is just £3 less than the average family spends on food & drink, electricity & gas, and rent combined. (4)
- Scotland's publicly provided school holiday childcare costs are higher than the rest of Britain: 11% higher than England, and 17% higher than Wales. (5)

**The availability of publicly provided school holiday childcare: halved under the SNP; slashed for those with additional needs.**

- Under the SNP, since 2012 the availability of sufficient publicly funded school holiday childcare for working parents has more than halved. (6)
- Availability for those with special educational needs and disabilities is less than a third of what it was four years ago. (6)

### **Introduction**

Childcare should be the most “important infrastructure project of this parliament”.

It's a good line - used by Nicola Sturgeon repeatedly - but the time has come to make it a reality. The SNP must deliver a childcare policy that actually meets the needs of working families in Scotland.

Labour agree with the SNP on the importance of childcare. It has the potential to be a transformative economic policy for Scotland, which would grow our economy and cut inequality if delivered effectively.

The problem is that under the SNP childcare is not being delivered effectively. There has been a comprehensive failure in delivery after a decade of SNP government. The revelations in this briefing about the cost of publicly provided school holiday childcare highlight how the SNP has failed to deliver on all-year round provision that meets the needs of working families.

The summer holidays are a difficult time for working parents. Accessing, and affording, good quality childcare is difficult. It's just not right that in Scotland in 2016, publicly provided holiday childcare costs as much as rent, heating and food bills combined.

It's time for an end to childcare policies written to fit on election leaflets. The SNP Government must deliver childcare that fits around the lives of working families. This briefing outlines how Labour would start Scotland on that journey.



**Iain Gray**  
**Education spokesperson**

### **What's wrong with the SNP's approach?**

Analysis carried out by the Scottish Parliament Information Centre (SPICe) shows that it costs more to send your child to a week of publicly provided school holiday childcare in Scotland than anywhere else in Britain.

In fact, publicly provided, school holiday childcare in Scotland costs as much as food, heating and rent combined.

The average single parent in Scotland will spend almost 20% of their income on sending their children to that type of holiday childcare and the average couple with two children will spend 30% of their income. That's just not right.

Responding to the Childcare Commission 2015 the Scottish Government said:

“Our aim is to develop high quality, flexible early learning and childcare which is affordable and accessible for all. This means the whole system - including out of school care - and not just the Government funded hours.

Since 2012 the number of local authorities with sufficient holiday childcare for children with working parents has halved, going from 50% to 24%.

This year only 1 in 10 local authorities have enough holiday childcare for children with special education needs and disabilities, in 2012 the number was 3 in 10. Working parents need childcare all year round, not just during term time. Parents are struggling to find adequate childcare and when they do it can be too expensive.

The First Minister also confirmed on 17 October that the Scottish Government will work to improve the flexibility of childcare as we move towards the 1,140 hours per year ensuring that parents can opt to take their available hours of free childcare to better suit their working patterns. Our aim is that parents will, increasingly, be able to take their hours as full day sessions as well as half days, and they will have the right to spread these hours over the summer holidays as well as during term time.

Naomi Eisenstadt, the First Minister's poverty advisor, says that investment in quality and affordable early learning and childcare is crucial because it can make all the difference to children from poorer backgrounds.

The SNP have pledged to expand the number of funded nursery hours for 3 and 4 and some 2 year olds to 1,140 per year, from 600.

Currently 1 in 5 children are missing out on their place.

Figures from SPICe confirm that the 2016/17 allocations to councils to deliver on the SNP Government's childcare pledge has fallen by £10.5 million (5.3%). This includes a 57% cut to council capital budgets to build the new nurseries required to meet the SNP's childcare pledge to provide 600 hours of free childcare a year.

## Time to deliver for working families

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	2015-16 £m	2016-17 £m	Change 2015-16 to 2016-17	
			£m	%
Real terms, 2015-16 prices				
Early Learning/Childcare - resource	119.2	138.3	19.1	16.1%
Other aspects of C&YP Act	11.8	21.6	9.8	83.3%
Total resource	131.0	160.0	29.0	22.1%
Early Learning/Childcare - capital	69.0	29.5	-39.5	-57.2%
Total	200.0	189.5	-10.5	-5.3%

To deliver the First Minister's pledge she will have to build 650 new nurseries and train 3250 new nursery staff within the next 5 years.

The National Day Nurseries Association have confirmed that half of Scottish nurseries say they are unlikely or unsure to be able to deliver the SNP's childcare pledge of an increase in funded hours.

Childcare in Scotland is becoming more and more unaffordable and the SNP budget is not going to help working families. The SNP budget cuts funding to build new nurseries by more than half and the underfunding of free hours is pushing up childcare costs for everyone.

The SNP's solution to the problems with childcare in Scotland is to slash the budgets for childcare and local services. Only in the world of the SNP will that deliver a childcare revolution.

### **What would Labour do differently?**

1. Stop the cuts. By using the tax powers of the Scottish Parliament to set an income tax rate just one penny higher than that set by the UK Government, we would stop the cuts to the local services providing holiday childcare that so many working families rely on.

2. Working families need childcare all year round, not just in term time. We have a plan to work towards the flexible, all-age, year-round, wrap-around affordable childcare that Scottish families need. As part of our proposals we will fund a breakfast club in every primary school in Scotland and use the proceeds from the “sugar tax” to support investment in after-school sport.

3. Under the Childcare Act 2006 all local authorities in England and Wales have a legal obligation to make sure there is sufficient childcare for working parents and those undertaking training. In Scotland there is no statutory duty to provide sufficient childcare to meet parental demand. Under the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act local authorities are required to take account of flexibility and choice in delivery of 600 hours; they must also consult parents about their power to provide out of school care and holiday care. Labour would change this by creating a statutory duty in Scotland similar to that in England and Wales.

Scottish Labour has been arguing for years that childcare policy in Scotland needs to fit around the lives of working parents rather than on an election leaflet. Experts, providers, academics and, above all, parents agree that childcare has to be about affordability and flexibility as well as free nursery hours, but SNP Ministers just won't listen to them.

The SNP's cuts to local services like schools and nurseries risk holding back the next generation. Cuts mean fewer classroom assistants, nursery staff and opportunities for extracurricular activities. Now we can see that it also means the highest publicly provided school holiday childcare in Britain.

It doesn't have to be this way. We can reject Tory austerity by using the powers of the Scottish Parliament to make different choices.

Given the choice between hundreds of millions of pounds of cuts and using the powers of the Scottish Parliament, Labour would use the powers to stop the cuts and grow our economy.

### References

- (1) The average weekly cost for sending a Scottish child to holiday childcare in the public sector has risen to £110.93 (Holiday Childcare Survey 2016, Family and Childcare Trust - [http://www.familyandchildcaretrust.org/sites/default/files/Holiday%20Childcare%20Survey%202016\\_9.pdf](http://www.familyandchildcaretrust.org/sites/default/files/Holiday%20Childcare%20Survey%202016_9.pdf))
- (2) The median family weekly income for single parent with children aged 5-14 is £574 (SPICe).
- (3) The median family weekly income for a couple with children aged 5-14 is £732 (SPICe).

- (4) Figures from SPICe:

#### Average weekly household expenditure (£), 2011-2013

	Scotland	UK
<b>Food &amp; non-alcoholic drinks</b>	54.80	56.80
<b>Electricity, gas and other fuels</b>	25.00	23.90
<b>Rent, Primary dwelling</b>	34.10	48.00

Combined Scottish figure for these three categories: £113.90. This figure is £2.97 more than the average cost of weekly holiday childcare in Scotland.

- (5) Weekly cost for public sector holiday childcare by nation (Holiday Childcare Survey 2016, Family and Childcare Trust):

Nation	Average public sector holiday childcare per week per child	Difference between Scotland as %
Scotland	£110.93	-
England	£99.64	<b>Scotland is 11.3% higher</b>
Wales	£94.81	<b>Scotland is 17.0% higher</b>

- (6) Holiday Childcare Survey 2016, Family and Childcare Trust (pg17) [http://www.familyandchildcaretrust.org/sites/default/files/Holiday%20Childcare%20Survey%202016\\_9.pdf](http://www.familyandchildcaretrust.org/sites/default/files/Holiday%20Childcare%20Survey%202016_9.pdf) . Table below derived from survey figures:

	Percentage of responding local authorities with sufficient holiday childcare (Scotland)	
	2012	2016
SEND (Special educational needs and disabilities)	31%	10%
Children with working parents	50%	24%