



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Creche Services Update

23 March 2023

Reference: SPCB (2023) Paper 21

Executive summary

1. This paper is written to give the SPCB an update on the mobilisation of the new Creche Service in the building. It is specifically looking for the SPCB to agree whether passholders should have to pay to use the service, as was the case with the previous creche.
2. The paper also considers how spaces at the new creche service should be allocated, to best support the business needs of the organisation.

Issues and options

3. After a full procurement exercise was completed, the contract to operate the new creche was awarded in October 2022 to service provider MyOhana. MyOhana, previously known as Tinies Limited, held the SPCB's previous Creche Services contract which ended in late 2020.
4. The new service will be open 8am-6pm on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, the days when the building is busiest and in line with parliamentary business.
5. Our service provider is currently nearing the completion of a recruitment exercise to establish a new team, as well as working through the required registration process with the Care Inspectorate.
6. It is anticipated that the Care Inspectorate will place a 4 hour limit on individual bookings, with a maximum of one booking per day, as a condition of our registration. This is due to the lack of outdoor play space we have available, meaning our facility is deemed suitable for temporary stays rather than full-time early years care. The proposed staffing ratios will allow for up to 10 children at any one time, covering pre-school ages of 6 weeks to 5 years' old (in line with the previous service).

7. The old service was targetted at external visitors, with it described as “emergency childcare” for passholders. The new service may prove more popular with passholders than previously, as a result of changing working patterns. Where the 4 hour limit may have been too restrictive for many working in the building previously, it could be the case that childcare provision for half a working day onsite is now suitable for a portion of those working in the building. The new service provider intends to operate drop-in sessions and carry out other engagement activity to promote the service to all types of passholders, including Members, Members’ Staff, Scottish Parliament Staff and Contractors.
8. As per the previous service, creche bookings will be available in advance but drop in bookings will also be accepted. We recognise that for the creche to be useful to those working in the building, they will need some assurance that they have a confirmed booking. We suggest that places can booked in blocks aligned with recess dates. For example, a booking period from the end of Easter recess until the end of Summer recess.
9. In the instance that the creche reaches full capacity, we recommend priority be given to business visitors (i.e. committee witnesses and constituents meeting with Members), then to Members and passholders. Subsequently, remaining spaces will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis. This approach will maintain the original purpose of the creche, to make parliamentary business accessible to those with young children, but also prioritise Members and key staff over general users.
10. We are engaging with the Parliamentary Communications Office to promote the service externally and internally. We are currently exploring the best means of making visitors to the building aware that the creche is available for use and will consult with key stakeholders across the organisation to help inform our communications.
11. The previous service was charged at £4 an hour for use by passholders but free to visitors. In terms of the overall budget, the service recouped a relatively small amount from this charge and it was essentially a nominal fee. The last annual creche budget, created for financial year 2019/20, forecasted £3.5K of income for the charge against an overall budget of £153K.
12. Our recommendation is to keep this nominal charge for passholders. It aligns with our responsibility to the public purse and avoids tax implications for passholders.

Governance

13. The Creche Service delivered through our contract with MyOhana, which is managed and procured by the SPCB's Facilities Management and Procurement Offices.

Resource implications

14. There are no resource implications.

Publication Scheme

15. This paper can be published in line with SPCB policy.

Next steps

16. Should the SPCB agree to our recommendations, we will ensure this information is included in our communications to passholders. We will commence the promotion of the re-opening of the creche once the Care Inspectorate registration has been awarded and an re-opening date confirmed.
17. The creche is expected to open around late April or early May, dependent on Care Inspectorate registration being obtained and the security clearance process being completed for the new staff.

Decision

18. The SPCB is invited to agree to retain the £4 an hour charge on creche bookings by passholders.
19. The SPCB is invited to agree priority should be given firstly to business visitors, secondly to Members and passholders supporting parliamentary business, and then on a first-come, first-served basis thereafter.

Facilities Management Office

March 2023