

Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by East Renfrewshire Council to close Glen Family Centre and introduce 0 to 3 year old services (currently provided at Glen Family Centre) to Glenwood Family Centre.

October 2025

1. Introduction

1.1 This report from Education Scotland has been prepared by His Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HM Inspectors) in accordance with the terms of the [Schools \(Consultation\) \(Scotland\) Act 2010](#) ("the 2010 Act"). The purpose of the report is to provide an independent and impartial consideration of a proposal by East Renfrewshire Council to close Glen Family Centre and introduce 0 to 3 year old services (currently provided at Glen Family Centre) to Glenwood Family Centre. Section 2 of the report sets out brief details of the consultation process. Section 3 of the report sets out HM Inspectors' consideration of the educational aspects of the proposal, including significant views expressed by consultees. Section 4 summarises HM Inspectors' view. Upon receipt of this report, the Act requires the council to consider it alongside any relevant considerations the council received and then prepare its consultation report. The council's consultation report should include this report and must contain an explanation of how, in finalising the proposal, it has reviewed the initial proposal, including a summary of points raised during the consultation process and the council's response to them. The council has to publish its consultation report at least three weeks before it takes its final decision. With all proposals the council needs to follow all statutory obligations set out in the 2010 Act. Where a council is proposing to close a school, there are specific additional obligations. These include notifying Ministers within six working days of making its final decision and explaining to consultees the opportunity they have to make representations to Ministers.

1.2 HM Inspectors considered:

- the likely effects of the proposal for children of the setting; any other users; children likely to become pupils within two years of the date of publication of the proposal paper; and other children in the council area;
- any other likely effects of the proposal;
- how the council intends to minimise or avoid any adverse effects that may arise from the proposal; and
- the educational benefits the council believes will result from implementation of the proposal, and the council's reasons for coming to these beliefs.

1.3 In preparing this report, HM Inspectors undertook the following activities:

- attendance at the public meeting held on 11 September 2025 in connection with the council's proposals;
- consideration of all relevant documentation provided by the council in relation to the proposal, specifically the educational benefits statement and related consultation documents, written and oral submissions from parents and others;
- consideration of further representations made directly to Education Scotland on relevant educational aspects of the proposal; and
- visits to the site of Glen Family Centre and Glenwood Family Centre, including discussion with relevant consultees.

2. Consultation process

2.1 East Renfrewshire Council undertook the consultation on its proposal(s) with reference to the [Schools \(Consultation\) \(Scotland\) Act 2010](#).

2.2 The formal consultation process ran from 13 August to 25 September 2025. The proposal paper was made available to a wide range of stakeholders. Interested parties were invited to respond to the statutory consultation by letter or electronically, including through survey run by the council. A total of 70 responses were received, including 26 responses from stakeholders who indicated they were parents and ten from stakeholders who indicated they were staff. Most respondents (91%) disagreed with the proposal to close Glen Family Centre and introduce 0-3 year old places for children at Glenwood Family Centre. The council held a public meeting on 11 September 2025 to enable public consultation on the proposal. Four parents, two members of the public and nine members of staff from the settings attended. Respondents asked questions to gain an understanding of the proposal and relevant information was provided by council officials.

3. Educational aspects of proposal

3.1 HM Inspectors agree with some of the educational benefits stated within the proposal, however more information is required for some aspects in order to make a fully informed decision.

3.2 In its educational benefits statement, the council recognises the contribution early learning and childcare (ELC) makes to the delivery of a broad general education for children. The council has outlined their statutory requirements. They state that the number of ELC places available, should the proposal go ahead, will continue to be sufficient for the requirements of the local area. This will ensure the council is able to provide eligible children with 1140 hours of funded early learning and childcare. However, not all stakeholders that spoke to HM Inspectors have a clear understanding of the statutory requirements a council has in relation to the provision of funded early learning and childcare. It will be important for the council to continue to communicate with stakeholders to increase their understanding.

3.3 HM Inspectors agree that the introduction of places for children aged 0-3 years at Glenwood Family Centre could support transitions and allow for continuity of experience and learning.

3.4 The council states the educational benefits of increasing two year old places across all four neighbourhoods to ensure children can attend an ELC setting within their own community. HM Inspectors agree that addressing any non-uptake of two year old places would be a benefit. HM Inspectors suggest the council expands on this benefit within its report on the consultation. This would help stakeholders to understand further how it will support families.

3.5 HM Inspectors recognise the potential benefits of a purpose-built space to support the delivery of high quality ELC experiences. Glenwood Family Centre is purpose-built for children aged three to five years. Spaces within Glen Family Centre are currently more suitable to meet the needs of very young children. The council states that the condition of Glen Family Centre is rated as C for condition and D for energy rating and requires major maintenance to the roof, heating and windows. It also details increasing financial implications of ongoing maintenance. The council notes that the proposal provides educational benefits from children learning in more modern, vibrant learning environments. Should the proposal go ahead, Glenwood Family Centre will require adaptation to ensure it is suitable to meet the needs of very young children and also continue to meet the needs of children already attending. HM inspectors agree that the proposal has the potential to provide educational benefit in regard to children learning in modern spaces and in regard to savings around building costs.

3.6 Currently, Glenwood Family Centre is operating significantly under capacity. Staff have taken advantage of this to maximise the benefits of the space available for children who attend currently. Senior leaders and staff in both settings who spoke to HM Inspectors, are concerned about the potential negative effects on the experiences of children of changing the space to adapt its use. HM inspectors recommend that, should the proposal be agreed, the council consult with and involve senior leaders and staff in planning for and implementing any adaptations.

3.7 HM Inspectors also agree there are potential benefits for staff. This includes the opportunity to work with different age groups of children. This could expand and deepen professional knowledge and understanding.

3.8 The educational benefits statement details the council's commitment to work with senior leaders in both settings to ensure a smooth transition if the two centres were to amalgamate. The council also recognises the importance of transitions for children and staff. HM Inspectors agree that this would be important and note that important transitions should also involve parents and families, who will require support throughout.

3.9 The council states that an Equality Fairness and Rights Impact Assessment (EFRIA) will be undertaken as part of the consultation process. This was shared with HM Inspectors during the preparation of this report. The council should ensure that the EFRIA is shared with all stakeholders in the consultation as was not previously available.

3.10 Almost all stakeholders, including parents, staff and visiting professionals with whom HM Inspectors had communication, are strongly opposed to the proposal. A few members of staff are undecided if they are in favour or not until clear plans for any adaptations are shared. All stakeholders acknowledge the difficult financial decisions the council has to make. However, they feel strongly that these decisions should not be to the detriment of the service offered by Glen Family Centre. Parents of children that spoke with HM Inspectors at Glen Family Centre acknowledge the fabric of the building requires investment. However, they view the significant educational benefits of the small setting as outweighing any financial benefits. They feel strongly that the smaller family-type environment and ethos that they, and their children, have benefitted from cannot be replicated within a larger setting such as Glenwood Family Centre. A few people would also like more information about how the places would be accommodated within Glenwood Family Centre before deciding if they supported the proposal.

3.11 Staff in both settings are concerned about how the proposal would impact on the quality of children's experiences. Staff at Glenwood recognise their setting is operating under capacity. However, they are concerned about how the loss of usable space for children aged three to five years would impact. They are keen to be involved in planning for any adaptations to ensure the benefits of the building are retained as far as possible. Staff at Glen Family Centre are deeply concerned about how the proposal may impact on the relationships they have with families and the quality of what they provide for children. Staff feel the smaller building has significant benefits as a first experience of ELC for children and families.

3.12 Professionals who spoke with HM Inspectors from other agencies, who visit both settings to support children, are strongly against the proposal. They state they feel the smaller setting better supports younger children, particularly those with additional support needs. They report benefits for children's care and education that the personal experience within the smaller setting brings. A few have particular concerns about how noise levels in larger settings can impact on language development. All professionals acknowledge the financial implications of the proposal and that some of the places offered at Glen Family Centre are non-statutory provision offered by the

council. In their opinion this is outweighed by the significant benefit they see as a result of children attending Glen Family Centre.

4. Summary

HM Inspectors agree that the proposal has the potential to improve financial efficiency. HM inspectors also agree that the proposal has the potential to deliver educational benefits. However, HM inspectors consider that the council has not explained sufficiently how these changes will improve on what is already in place. Almost all stakeholders who engaged with HM Inspectors, including parents, staff and visiting professionals strongly disagree with the proposal. In its consultation report, it would be helpful for the council to expand on its educational benefits statement to evidence the benefits more clearly. This should include more information on how any potential negative impacts of closing Glen Family Centre will be mitigated. If the proposal proceeds, the council should continue with plans to fully engage with senior leaders and staff from both settings to ensure that the quality of experience of all children are not negatively impacted. This includes children, families and staff being involved in planning for the necessary adaptations and ensuring transitions for everyone are well supported.

**HM Inspectors
October 2025**