

# Breakfasts – National Context

Christian Barry, Unit Head  
9th June 2026

BrightStartBreakfasts@gov.scot



## Our vision

A rights based, dynamic school age childcare offer for children and young people, which supports choice and growth, enabling families and communities to reach their full potential.

## Realising our vision - What our programme will deliver

"Scotland will have a system of accessible and affordable school age childcare providing care before and after school and during the holidays for primary school children from low income households. Children will be able to access healthy and nutritious food as part of this offer."

## Why are we doing it?

### Tackling Child Poverty

Parents from targeted families are able to access childcare that supports them to take up, sustain and/or increase their hours of work. Reducing barriers to employment by improving access to childcare for targeted families.

### Improving outcomes for children

Reducing inequalities which exist in access to a wide range of activities for children from targeted families. Improving family wellbeing by supporting and increasing access to integrated childcare, food and activities.

## Who will it help?

Our work is focused on supporting low income families, particularly those within the six priority family groups most likely to be living in poverty.

- ✓ Minority Ethnic families
- ✓ Mothers aged <25
- ✓ Large families (3+ Children)
- ✓ Families with a disabled adult or child
- ✓ Families with a baby (aged <1)
- ✓ Lone Parents

## How will we do it?

We will design our school age childcare system around people's needs and what's important to communities.

**Place based**



**People Centred**



# School Age Childcare Programme



Funds early delivery of childcare and activities to improve short term outcomes for families



Maximises existing funded services and financial supports for families

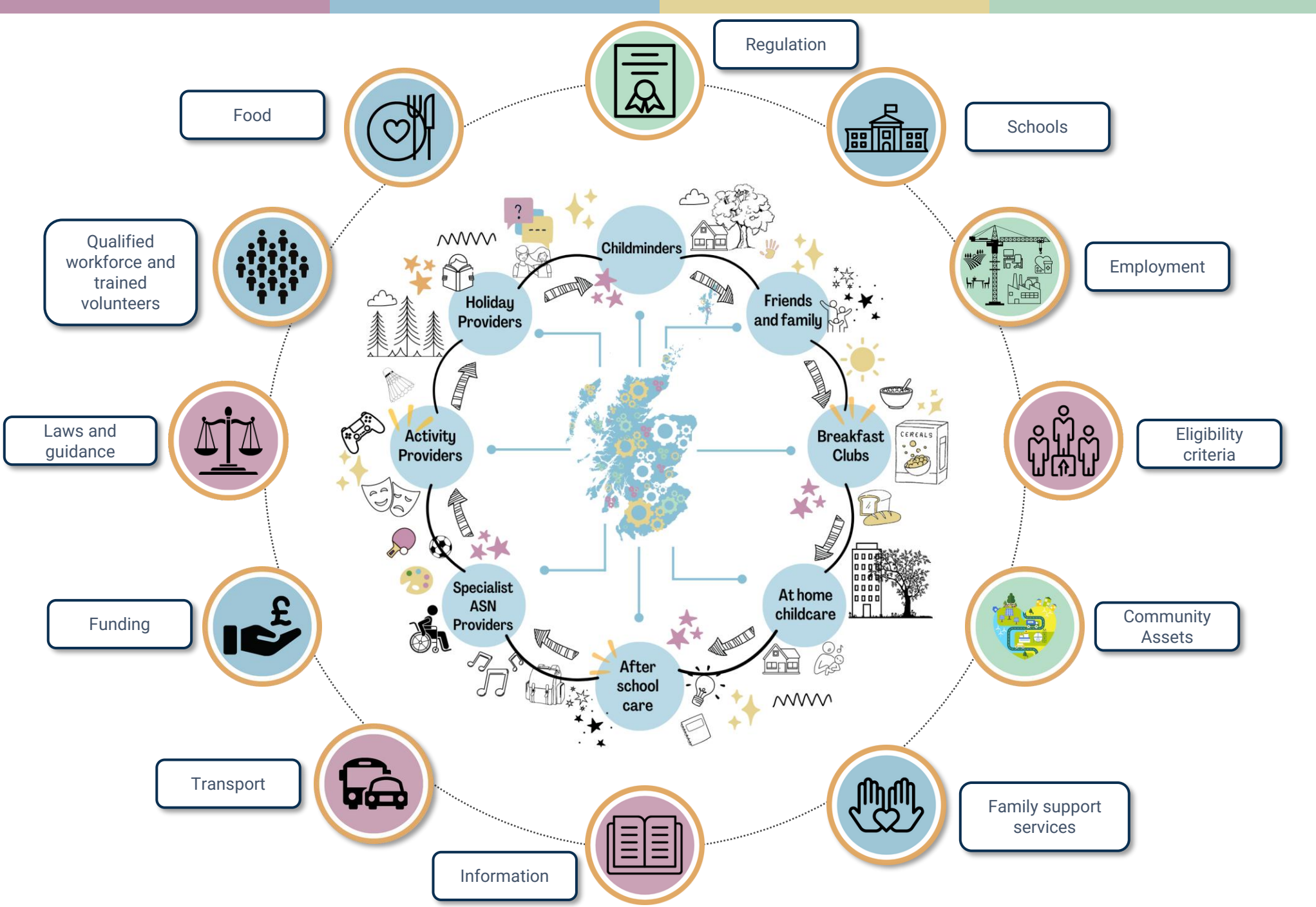


Uses learning from delivery, evaluation and engagement to design policy which supports further expansion



In the service of Scotland

# System of school age childcare



Where we've got to /  
what we've learned



# School Age Childcare Programme delivery in 2025/26

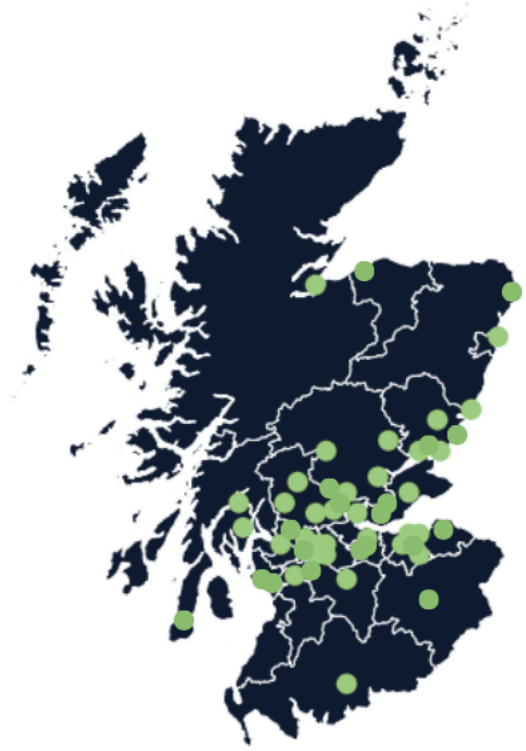
## Extra Time Project with the Scottish Football Association



Supports local football clubs and trusts to provide before and after school and holiday activity clubs



Tests how organised activities for children will form part of our future system of school age childcare



Extra Time clubs and trusts in 2026

## Early Adopter Communities



Expand access to affordable childcare and family support services for low income families



Provide services for families with children from early years to the end of primary school



Bring services together into local systems of childcare and evaluate the difference this can make



A Linlathen, Dundee



B Alloa, Clackmannanshire



C Port Glasgow, Inverclyde



D Drumchapel and Carntyne, Glasgow



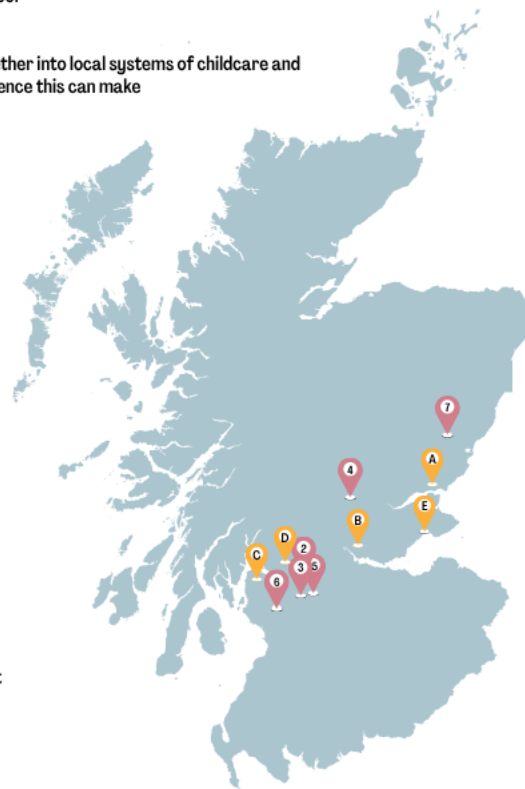
E Levenmouth, Fife



F North Isles and West Mainland, Shetland



SCMA EAC project works in all locations



## Access to Childcare Fund Projects



1 Hame Fae Hame, Shetland



2 The Indigo Childcare Group, Glasgow



3 St Mirin's Out of School Club, Glasgow



4 SHIP, Perth



5 Stepping Stones for Families, Glasgow



6 SupERkids, East Renfrewshire



7 The Wee Childcare Company, Angus



Rural provision



Incorporating family support into funded offer



Trauma informed staff, support during school day, outdoor woodland space, relationship with school



Volunteers to provide individual support



Incorporating weekend provision into offer



Children with ASN



Rural provision

## Bright Start Breakfasts 2025/2026



£3 million investment in 2025/2026 to expand access to breakfast clubs for primary school children



Includes the creation of free breakfast club places for those who need it most



490 breakfast clubs funded across Scotland (not shown)

# Insights to date - the Programme has learned about...



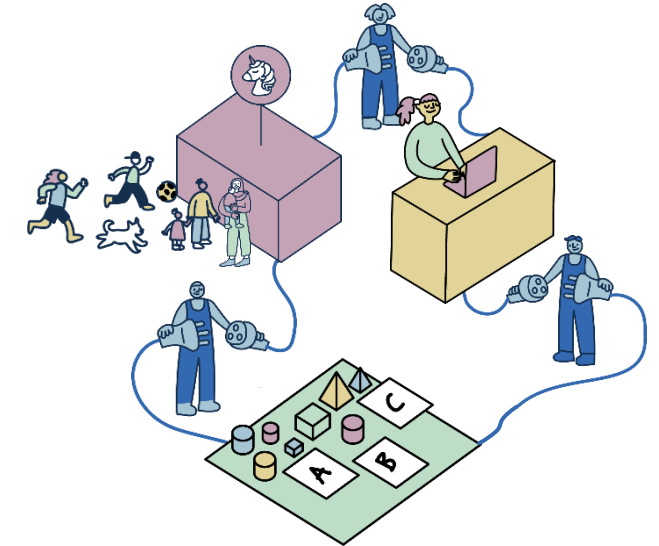
## ... delivery in communities through

- Access to Childcare Fund
- Summer programme funding
- Early Adopter Communities
- SFA Extra time
- SCMA projects
- Breakfast mapping and BSB Funding



## ... the needs of parents, carers, providers and children through

- People Panel phases 1 and 2
- Children's Charter
- Provider engagement workshops
- Programme User Needs
- Digital Service Discovery and scoping



## ... system change through

- Mapping legislative landscape
- Engagement with regulators
- Regulatory project – to review SACC regs
- Policy engagement, especially Tackling Child Poverty
- Research, interviews, analytical work
- SACC system mapping
- Breakfast mapping

# Breakfast Mapping - 2024

Improvement Service conducted a mapping exercise to improve our understanding of what breakfast and after school club provision exists in schools across Scotland in 2024. This built on data collected from a survey conducted by ASSIST FM in 2023.

- Phase 1 - desk research
- Phase 2 - a survey of all Scottish primary and special schools, with an 85% response rate covering 30 of the 32 LA areas.

## High Level Findings

- Around half of all primary and special schools in Scotland already provide breakfast via a mix of models and providers.
- There is some form of breakfast provision in 27 of the 32 Local Authorities. 6 local authorities have a policy of universal breakfast provision (available to all children in all schools)
- 74% of schools provide breakfast as part of a broader childcare or early supervision offer, with 26% offering a “grab and go” or in-classroom option of food only.
- 96% of schools provide breakfast 5 days a week.
- 43% make breakfast available to all children on the school roll with 12% offering breakfast to some children on a targeted basis.
- 51% of schools are responsible for arranging breakfast clubs directly; 34% noted the LA arranges provision; 15% reported other parties support with arrangements, including parents, private providers and third sector providers.
- 59% provide free breakfasts; while 20% provide breakfast free for certain groups, or partly subsidise the cost.

# Breakfast Club Expansion



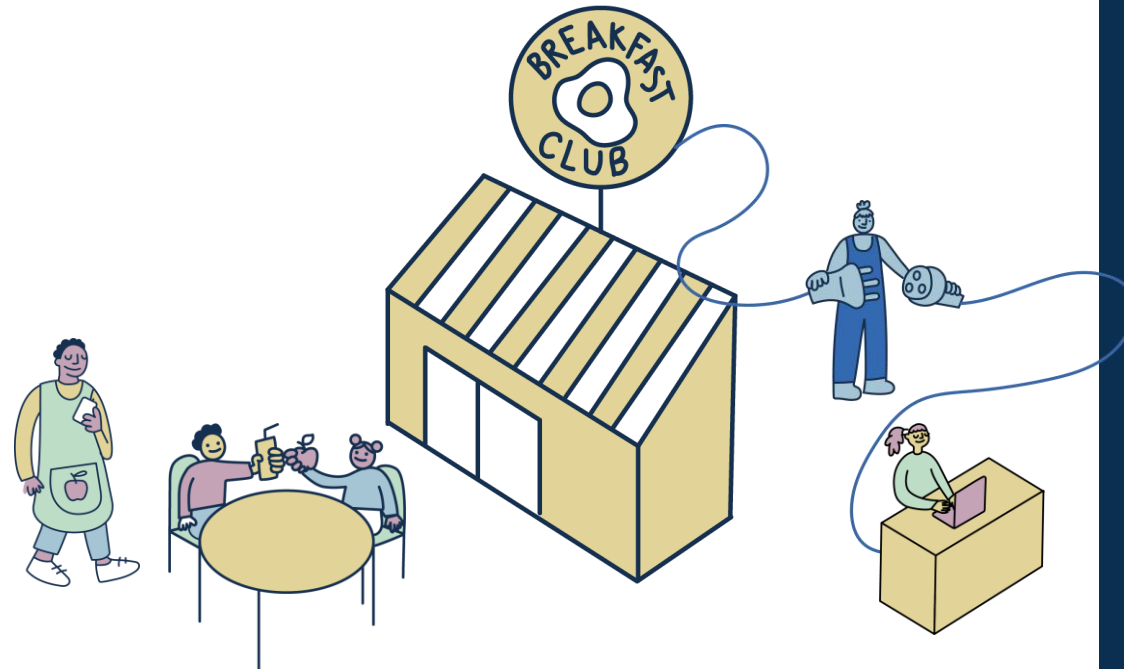
# Expansion of breakfast clubs - 2026

The Scottish Budget will provide an additional £15 million in 2026-27 to expand breakfast club provision and help schools, councils and third sector partners prepare for the introduction of universal breakfast club services by August 2027.

The Scottish Government then plans to invest £44 million per year from 2027-28 to deliver the clubs for all primary school children in Scotland who want to access them. Every pupil attending a school specifically for children with additional support needs will also benefit.

## Wider Context

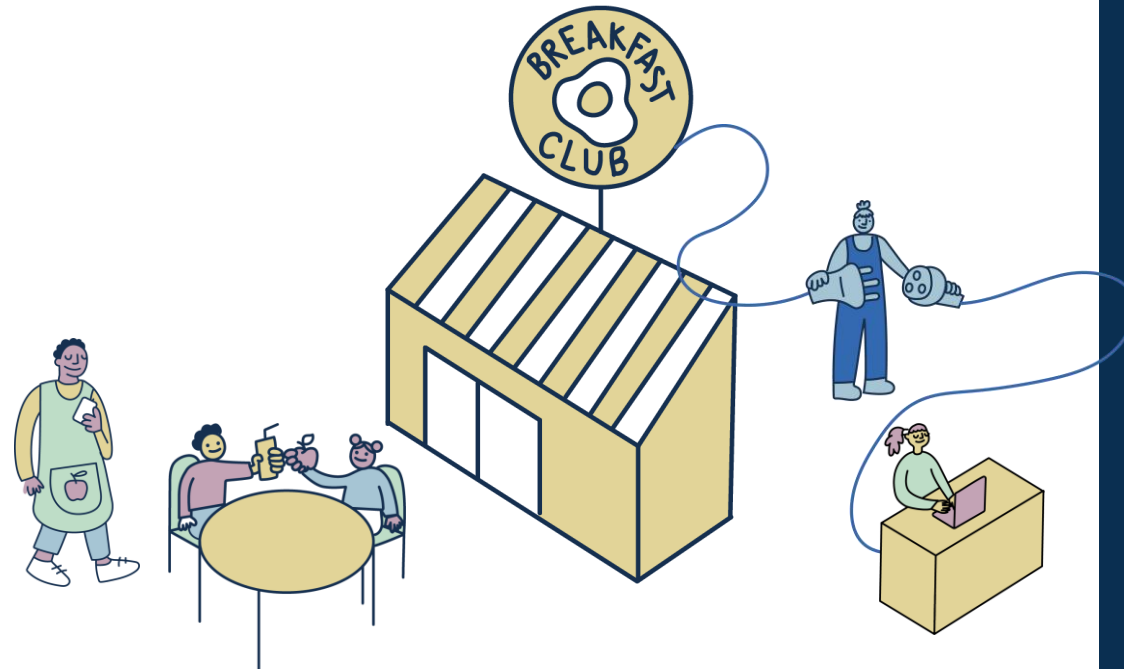
**Extend childcare from 9 months to end of primary, 52 weeks a year, by end of next parliament.**



# Expansion of breakfast clubs - 2026

**Rationale** – An estimated 21% of children were living in relative poverty in 2022-25. SG has set ambitious targets to reduce rates of child poverty in Scotland: by 2030 fewer than 10% of children in Scotland live in relative poverty. Expanding the availability of flexible and affordable childcare/supervision and providing a free breakfast can help save money on food and childcare costs and reduce barriers to employment, supporting families to increase their earned incomes.

**Vision** – Every child at primary school in Scotland can access a breakfast club. This has contributed to supporting parents with an early drop-off before school, allowing them to get to work, reducing costs for families and improving children's outcomes.

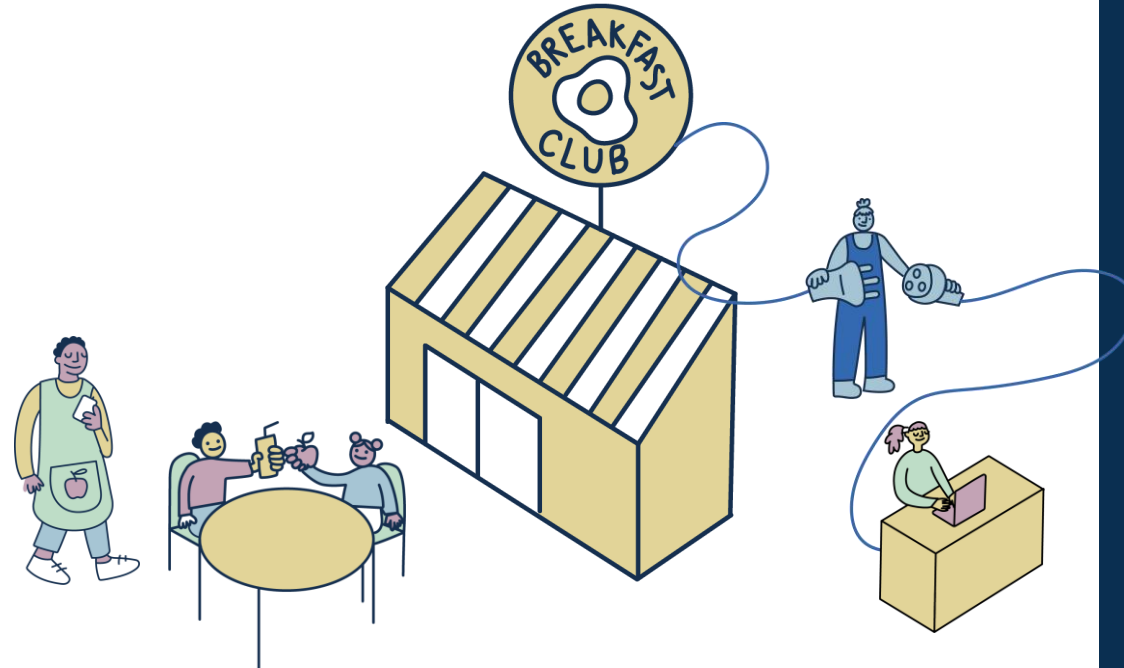


# Expansion of breakfast clubs - 2026

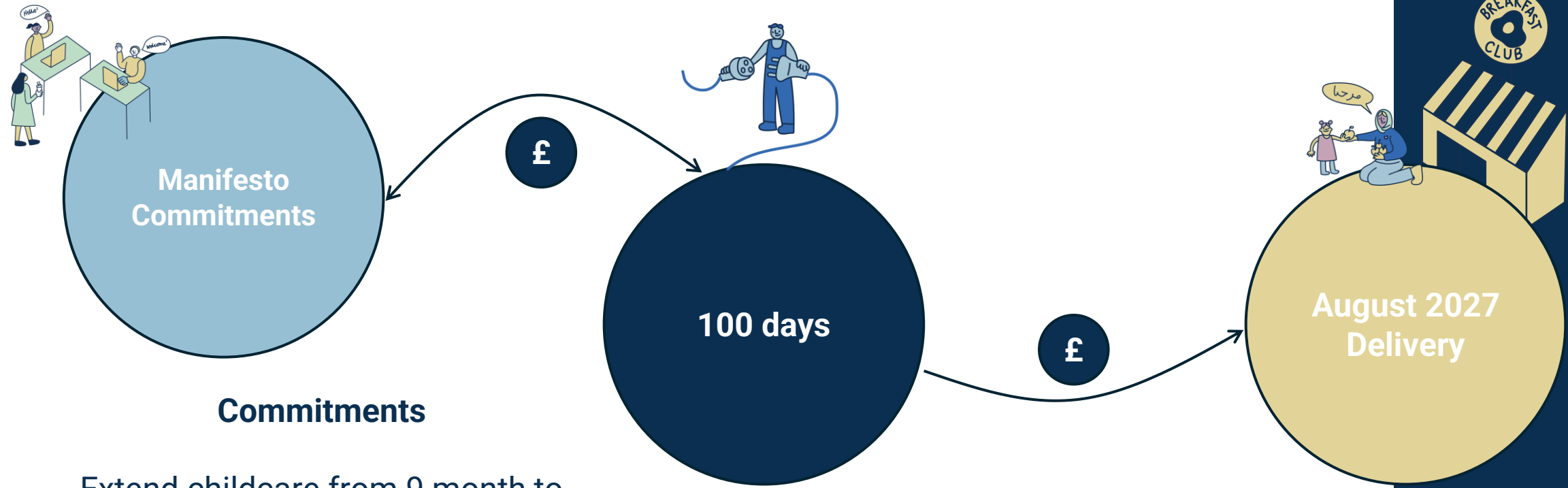
**Outcomes for children (short term)** – More children eat breakfast; more children arrive at school on time; children are more settled at the start of the school day; reduced stigma for children from low-income families; children spend more time socialising with peers

**Outcomes for parents/families (short term)** – More parents have access to early drop off, allowing them to get to work or study earlier; parents have more time in the morning; reduced stress on families at the start of the day; reduced household food costs; reduced household childcare costs

**Long-term** outcomes – Increased school attendance; improved peer/social relationships; improved concentration and behaviour at school



# Post-election context

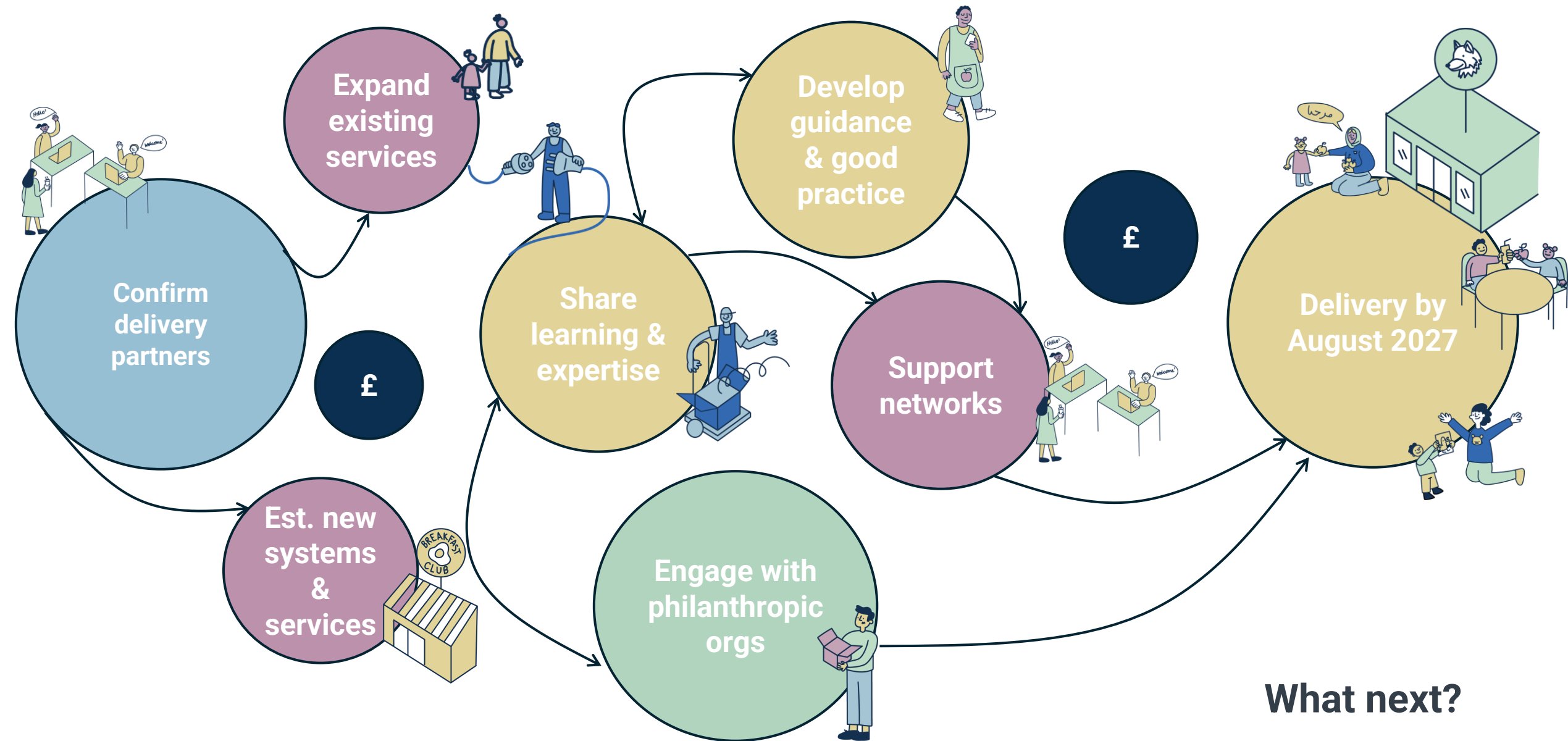


## Commitments

Extend childcare from 9 month to end of primary, 52 weeks a year, by end of next parliament.

Invest £44 million each year to deliver Bright Start Breakfast clubs across all primary and special schools from August 2027

# What next – a system of organisations



What next?

Christian Barry, Unit Head  
9th June 2026  
Christian.barry@gov.scot

