

Section 06

Refurbishment Solutions

## Section 06 - Refurbishment Solutions

### Introduction

It is recognised that a large proportion of the delivery of 1140hrs will be through existing premises. In some cases refurbishment or alteration work will be required to meet the requirements of Space to Grow.

The pilot design, although for a new build setting, provide a pool of ideas to draw upon for a refurbishment project. In this section we have outlined some of those that are worth consideration when developing a strategy for an existing premises.

### Creation of a Gallery or Upper Level

The pilot designs show that registerable play area can be created on an upper level. Where existing facilities enjoy the benefit of tall floor to ceiling heights it may be possible to insert a mezzanine or gallery. Creative use of a volume can generate great learning and dynamic play spaces.

Consideration should be given to the available height above and below a proposed mezzanine / gallery and how appropriate this is. Every condition will require a different solution and providers should seek professional advice on technical aspects, for instance fire escape strategy and detection and alarm systems is a key consideration.

### Improving the learning environment in playrooms

Internally there are potentially many aspects that could be considered as part of a refurbishment of an existing setting, and will vary vastly depending on current condition. Considering aspects such as improving provision of natural light and acoustics, and considering decoration and surfaces can improve the comfort and wellbeing for the children and staff. It may be that improvements to provide suitable kitchen and back of house areas will be required in order to meet the service demand of a space, or tackling storage issues in order to accommodate dining furniture for the increased ELC provision.





### Outdoor space solutions – A more natural approach

Achieving up to 20% additional capacity through outdoor play needs full assessment of the learning outcomes and experiences provided outside. Many existing premises have outdoor play areas dominated by hard surfaces and so limit the experiences outdoors. While it is important to retain some hard surface for wheeled play equipment, art and all weather play, consideration should be given to natural environment.

Before action is taken, learning outcomes and experiences from the outdoor environment needs to be planned. This will then tell providers what action is required to meet those needs. This should form the basis of a design brief for the space. It may be beneficial to seek professional advice on the viability of achieving more natural environment in each location.

My world outdoors is a useful document that should be read in conjunction with this process to inform decisions.

### Outdoor space solutions – Opportunities nearby

Learning and play outcomes may be supplemented by looking beyond the boundaries of the nursery facility. Providers should make an assessment of what is locally available and easily accessible. This may be a beach, a park, allotments, museums, woodland and so on.

If there is sufficient value in the learning experiences and outcomes then a service may wish to consider how this process could be resourced and managed.

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### Addition of external support pods such as external toilets and boot-rooms

Achieving up to 20% additional capacity through outdoor play needs to be accompanied by suitable provision of supporting accommodation. Principal among the functional requirements is an external toilet. Further support can be provided through a means to store and dry outdoor gear such as waterproofs and wellies. This needs to be considered in tandem with the ability to provide suitable learning experiences and outcomes from the outdoor environment. If these outcomes and experiences are unlikely to be delivered then this may not be a viable approach.

In those instances where outdoor experiences are likely to support the addition provision, it should be considered if minor alterations would facilitate the inclusion of an externally accessible toilet. If it is not possible then one solution could be to introduce a new build toilet support pod.

A boot room is a useful addition to ease the flow of children to the outdoors during inclement weather. It also provides the opportunity for outdoor gear to dry out. This makes the experience of going outdoors in all weathers more pleasant, as you always have access to dry waterproof clothing and wellies.

Where possible it should be considered if minor alterations would facilitate the inclusion of a boot room or heated and ventilated cloaks. If it is not possible then one solution could be to introduce a new build boot room support pod.

### Dining Provision

Dining provision in refurbishment settings will require careful consideration. Thought will need to be allocated to the suitability of catering facilities. Providers should consider whether their kitchen will offer a reheat or full catering provision. The spatial implications of each approach need to be weighed against the ability to achieve the requirements in each setting. Consideration will also need to be given to the number of children to dine in one

sitting, its impact on the day and the availability of appropriate numbers of staff. Decisions here may also have an implication on the quantity of tables and chairs needed. This in turn may generate a need for additional storage within the setting. The quality of the dining experience for the children is paramount and should be regarded as the over-arching factor when taking these strategic and practical decisions.





# Section 07

## Conclusion

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The design process for this Early Years Reference Design has been a very positive one based on creative collaboration with a diverse range of stakeholders, all of whom have helped to shape a convivial proposal fit to meet the growing needs of Early Years educational provision in Scotland. At the heart of our design is the experience of children. A variety of appropriately scaled spaces which stimulate the experiential development of very young people, both internally and externally, have formed the core of our proposal, and all of these spaces have been contained within a simple, flexible and adaptable envelope conducive to change. Many external influences, including planning requirements or unusual site constraints, can of course shape the final outcome of any particular project, however this reference design does demonstrate that a stimulating proposal can be delivered which blends quality and economy in a very positive manner. Crucially, the nature of the external play spaces provided not only allows additional registration capacity, but delivers further sensory experiences for the children at the heart of our design.

Ultimately, flexibility in form combined with the use of common components can deliver interesting solutions to a national debate.







