# Out of school care in Scotland

## DRAFT FRAMEWORK 2019



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
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# Contents

This draft framework has been developed by the Scottish Government in partnership with children, families, providers of out of school care and organisations with an interest in children's outcomes.

# 1. Minister's view
## By Maree Todd
## Minister For Children And Young People

**The Scottish Government's vision is for Scotland to be the best place in the world for children and young people to grow up and learn.**

The significant expansion of funded early learning and childcare from August 2020 provides a cornerstone to ensuring that every child has the best start in life. As we move to 2020, it is also important to recognise the vital role out of school care plays in providing essential childcare services for families and a wide range of experiences for children.

Available evidence points to the importance of out of school care for the whole family. Children can benefit from improved outcomes through opportunities for play and learning. Access to childcare can support parents to work, train or study with the knowledge that their children are being well cared for. These opportunities for parents can lead to increased earnings, which in turn helps to reduce levels of child poverty.

We also know that out of school care, including holiday childcare, has a vital role in addressing both economic and social exclusion. The evidence tells us that out of school care can provide improved outcomes for children from more disadvantaged backgrounds in particular.

Despite these benefits, we know that there are barriers that exist that are limiting the ability of families to access out of school care. For parents to be able to take advantage of work, training or study opportunities, childcare needs to be affordable, accessible and flexible to meet their needs. It is in this context that we committed to developing a strategic framework for after-school and holiday childcare over the course of this Parliament.

A new framework will focus on positive outcomes for those children who stand to benefit most from access to out of school care, and we know that this not only applies to primary age children but to older children too. This draft framework is the first step in that process, and is the product of extensive engagement with children, parents, out of school care providers and other experts in the sector. This is an exciting opportunity to create a new and ambitious policy for out of school care in Scotland.

As we continue these discussions, I want to ensure that everyone is able to play their part in developing a new framework that delivers for Scotland's children and young people. This draft framework lays the groundwork for that ongoing policy development and presents the stories and voices of those we have engaged with so far. I look forward to continuing this conversation as we set out our bold vision for out of school care to better meet the needs of children and families in Scotland.

# 2. Introduction

## Why Do We Need a Framework for Out of School Care?

The Scottish Government is focussed on creating a more successful country with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish through increased wellbeing, and sustainable and inclusive economic growth. Access to high quality, affordable and flexible childcare has a huge role to play in enabling this. Our expansion of funded early learning and childcare will provide increased opportunities for children to access play and learning at an early age but we know that widening access to a range of out of school activities for children could help broaden their experiences and supplement their learning. Making childcare options for school aged children more affordable, flexible and accessible can help provide families with the stability they need to be able to secure employment and increase their earnings in order to achieve a good standard of living. Accessing affordable out of school care could enable families to lift themselves out of poverty and for all children and young people, to be able to benefit from a range of activities and experiences which will deliver positive outcomes.

That is why this framework for future delivery is so important.

A future framework for out of school care will provide the foundation and structure for the creation of new policies around before, after school and holiday childcare and activity provision. The framework will recognise and build on the valuable work already being undertaken by a wide range of organisations and individuals delivering high quality childcare and activities for families across Scotland.

## What is the purpose of the consultation?

This draft framework sets out our thinking as a result of our engagement work to date.

Our draft framework will:

- set out a vision for out of school care in Scotland and consider the changes required to deliver that vision.

- consider the current picture of out of school care in Scotland.

- ask questions about what more we can do to realise that vision.

Your responses to the consultation will, together with our continuing engagement, inform the development of a strategic framework for out of school care which will be published before the end of this parliamentary term.

# Policy Background

## National Performance Framework

In 2018, the National Performance Framework was relaunched following discussions and engagement with organisations and communities from across Scotland. The Framework sets out a vision for national wellbeing covering a range of economic, social and environmental factors. It brings a new degree of transparency around the work of government, as well as communicating very clearly the outcomes that the people of Scotland want us to achieve. A collaborative approach to service delivery sits at the centre of Scottish Government, and is crucial for articulating and delivering on our vision for Scotland. In developing a new framework for Out of School Care, we have closely followed this collaborative approach. This draft framework is the result of extensive engagement with parents, children, the out of school care sector and a range of stakeholders that share our ambition for Scotland to be the best place in the world to grow up and learn.

Our National performance framework is for all of Scotland. It sets out our purpose and national outcomes.



**OUR PURPOSE**
To focus on creating a more successful country with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish through increased wellbeing, and sustainable and inclusive economic growth

**OUR VALUES**
We are a society which treats all our people with kindness, dignity and compassion, respects the rule of law, and acts in an open and transparent way

- We have a globally competitive, entrepreneurial, inclusive and sustainable economy
- We are open, connected and make a positive contribution internationally
- We tackle poverty by sharing opportunities, wealth and power more equally
- We live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe
- We grow up loved, safe and respected so that we realise our full potential
- We are well educated, skilled and able to contribute to society
- We have thriving and innovative businesses, with quality jobs and fair work for everyone
- We are healthy and active
- We value, enjoy, protect and enhance our environment
- We are creative and our vibrant and diverse cultures are expressed and enjoyed widely
- We respect, protect and fulfil human rights and live free from discrimination

**Figure 1:** National Performance Framework

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# Poverty and Inequality

We know that poverty and inequality act to limit the opportunities for some children in Scotland. Disadvantages experienced from birth onwards can impact adversely on the life chances of our children, and result in poor health, employment, educational and social outcomes. We are determined to close this gap and to open the doors of opportunity. We want to support families to lift themselves out of poverty and to enable children and young people to have access to a wide range of activities and experiences. This is why we are focussed on supporting children and families.

## Tackling Child Poverty

The most recent child poverty statistics available estimate that almost 1 in 4 children (24%) were living in poverty[1] in Scotland in the period 2015-18. Independent projections suggest that this figure will increase in the coming years. The Child Poverty (Scotland) Act sets in statute our ambition to eradicate child poverty in Scotland and sets ambitious targets, to reduce child poverty levels to fewer than 1 in 10 children, to be met by 2030.

We know that experience of poverty is not uniform across Scotland. Local level estimates suggest that child poverty levels are considerably higher in specific areas – influenced by local factors such as the strength of the labour market. This is why the Act also places a duty on local authorities and health boards to jointly produce annual Local Child Poverty Action Reports, outlining the actions they are taking to reduce poverty. The Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan also identifies six family types that are at greater risk of experiencing poverty, these have been identified as the priority groups outlined below:

In developing the Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan we examined the evidence base carefully to identify the main drivers of poverty and concluded that there are three direct drivers of child poverty reduction. Costs of living and income from employment are two of the primary drivers and are both directly influenced by childcare. The third, income from social security and benefits in kind, provides much needed support for parents and can help top-up earnings and incentivise work.

Income from employment is itself determined by a person's hourly rate and the number of hours they work. In order for parents to increase their hours, and therefore their take home pay, flexible and affordable childcare must be in place. Childcare and the cost of accessing experiences and activities for children are often inescapable for families and can have a significant impact on their disposable income. Any reduction in the cost of these essentials will leave a household with more disposable income allowing them to purchase the essentials they need for a good quality of life.

Lone Parents | Person with a disability | 3+ Children | Minority Ethnic | Youngest Child <1 | Parents Aged <25

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1    Relative Poverty, After Housing Costs - Poverty and income inequality in Scotland: 2015-2018 – Scottish Government, March 2019

In November 2018, the Poverty and Inequality Commission provided advice to the Scottish Government on addressing poverty during school holidays. The Commission underline that families face a range of additional costs and pressures during the school holidays. These include the cost and availability of holiday childcare; financial pressures such as additional costs for food, fuel and activities/transport; providing play opportunities and activities on a low income, parenting challenges and social isolation for both parents and children with existing supports and activities stopping.

The 2018 report made several recommendations including that the Scottish Government, COSLA and local authorities should work together to take a strategic approach to developing and funding a coordinated package of school holiday support that addresses the full range of pressures faced by families with low incomes and that building from existing services, holiday club provision, with nutritious and culturally appropriate food as a core element, should be available for all children from low income families.

## Inclusive Growth and Employability

We aim to achieve economic growth in Scotland that is inclusive. This means growth that combines increased prosperity with greater equality, creates opportunities for all, and distributes the benefits of increased prosperity fairly.

We aim to create the right environment for more inclusive employment opportunities to flourish. Through supporting investment, innovation, internationalisation and fair work, we are encouraging competitiveness and more responsible business behaviour.

While unemployment is currently low by historical standards there are still many who struggle to find work, and stay in work.  Many people will face multiple barriers, including childcare and so more intensive approaches, tailored to individual needs can help those who most need it.

At the same time levels of in-work poverty experienced by families have risen to record highs, influenced by low pay and insecure contracts of employment offering insufficient hours and job security to afford a good standard of living.

Our aim is to support people into work by ensuring the employability offer in Scotland is person-centred, flexible and responsive to the needs of individuals and employers. Our new investment in Parental Employment Support will also support parents in low paid work to progress and increase their earnings. This is critical to help people access fair work, and help them achieve their full potential in an inclusive and fair economy.

# United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) sets out the fundamental rights of all children and young people. The UK ratified the UNCRC in 1991. Scottish Government will legislate to incorporate the UNCRC into Scots law. We believe that delivering the rights of children and young people as enshrined in the UNCRC is fundamental to making children's rights real. It forms the basis of our national approach for supporting children, called Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC). There are many articles contained within the UNCRC which are hugely relevant to out of school care including Article 31 which describes a child's right to culture, leisure, rest and play – Every child has the right to relax, play and take part in a wide range of cultural and artistic activities. Our Play Strategy commits us to being a nation which values play as a life-enhancing daily experience for all our children and young people; in their homes, nurseries, schools and communities.



## Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)

Our GIRFEC approach underpins all our work with children and young people and means working across organisational boundaries and putting children and their families at the heart of decision making. Our approach is about everyone working together to support every child and young person's wellbeing – by spotting and dealing with issues as early as possible, and working with parents and services before they escalate into potential crisis.

## Early Learning and Childcare

From August 2020, the provision of funded early learning and childcare (ELC) will increase from 600 hours to 1140 hours. The expansion is an opportunity to ensure that we are prioritising a high quality experience for all children, recognising the significant contribution that universally accessible ELC can make to a child's development and to closing the poverty related attainment gap.

The expansion of funded early learning and childcare entitlement will provide parents with 30 hours (if taken term-time) of free at the point of access early learning and childcare per week for all 3 and 4 year olds (and 2 year olds who meet certain eligibility criteria). This policy is focussed on ensuring a universal best start for all children and reducing the poverty related attainment gap, it will also enable parents to consider their own situation and may be a factor in enabling them to access or increase education or employment.

Childcare responsibilities and improving outcomes for children continue beyond early learning and childcare and we know that working hours for many don't align with the school day. This means that for most parents childcare requirements will continue to be necessary wrapping around the school day and particularly during extended school holiday periods. Outcomes for children are linked not only to the learning that takes place during school hours but also to the range of life enhancing experiences and opportunities that are available to children outside of school hours and during holiday times. We know that for many children this range of positive experiences remains out of reach.

## Curriculum for Excellence

Scotland's curriculum is defined as all the experiences that are planned for learners wherever they are being educated. It can take account of all the experiences that children and young people can have through learning out with school and in activity that would previously have been thought of as extra-curricular. The purpose of the curriculum is to enable every child or young person to be a successful learner, a confident individual, a responsible citizen and an effective contributor. The curriculum aims to ensure that all children and young people in Scotland develop the knowledge, skills and attributes they will need if they are to flourish in life.

Good quality out of school care helps children and young people to develop these capacities thereby complementing what happens in school and at home. It provides children with a range of experiences which enrich and enhance their lives, and support their progress and achievement.

That is why the Scottish Government has committed to developing policy for out of school care in Scotland:

• The 2017-18 Programme for Government committed us to publishing a framework for after school and holiday childcare within this parliamentary term. The 2018-19 Programme for Government provided more detail, noting that we will publish a consultation asking for views on that draft framework in the next year.

• Within the Child Poverty Delivery Plan, Every Child, Every Chance, one of the 15 highlighted actions is new support for childcare after school and in the holidays to help low income parents reduce childcare costs, work more flexibly and increase their incomes. We committed to assess the availability of existing after school and holiday childcare, setting out what we will do to better meet the needs of families.



THE SCOTTISH ATTAINMENT CHALLENGE

SCOTLAND: THE BEST PLACE IN THE WORLD TO LEARN

**The Scottish Attainment Challenge, backed by the £750m Attainment Scotland fund is a targeted initiative to tackle the poverty related attainment gap. As part of this, there are a number of key funding streams: Pupil Equity Funding, Challenge Authorities Programme, Schools Programme and Care Experienced Children and Young People funding.**

**These funds have supported out of school care and activity programmes with a focus on:**

• **Tackling food insecurity**

• **Promoting outdoor play and learning**

• **Creating opportunities to participate in sport and physical activities**

• **Family learning programmes**

• **Study clubs/supported study sessions.**

# Policy Links

Across Scottish Government there are a wide range of policies supporting children and families. Out of school care impacts many of these policy areas. Some of the current connections are shown here:
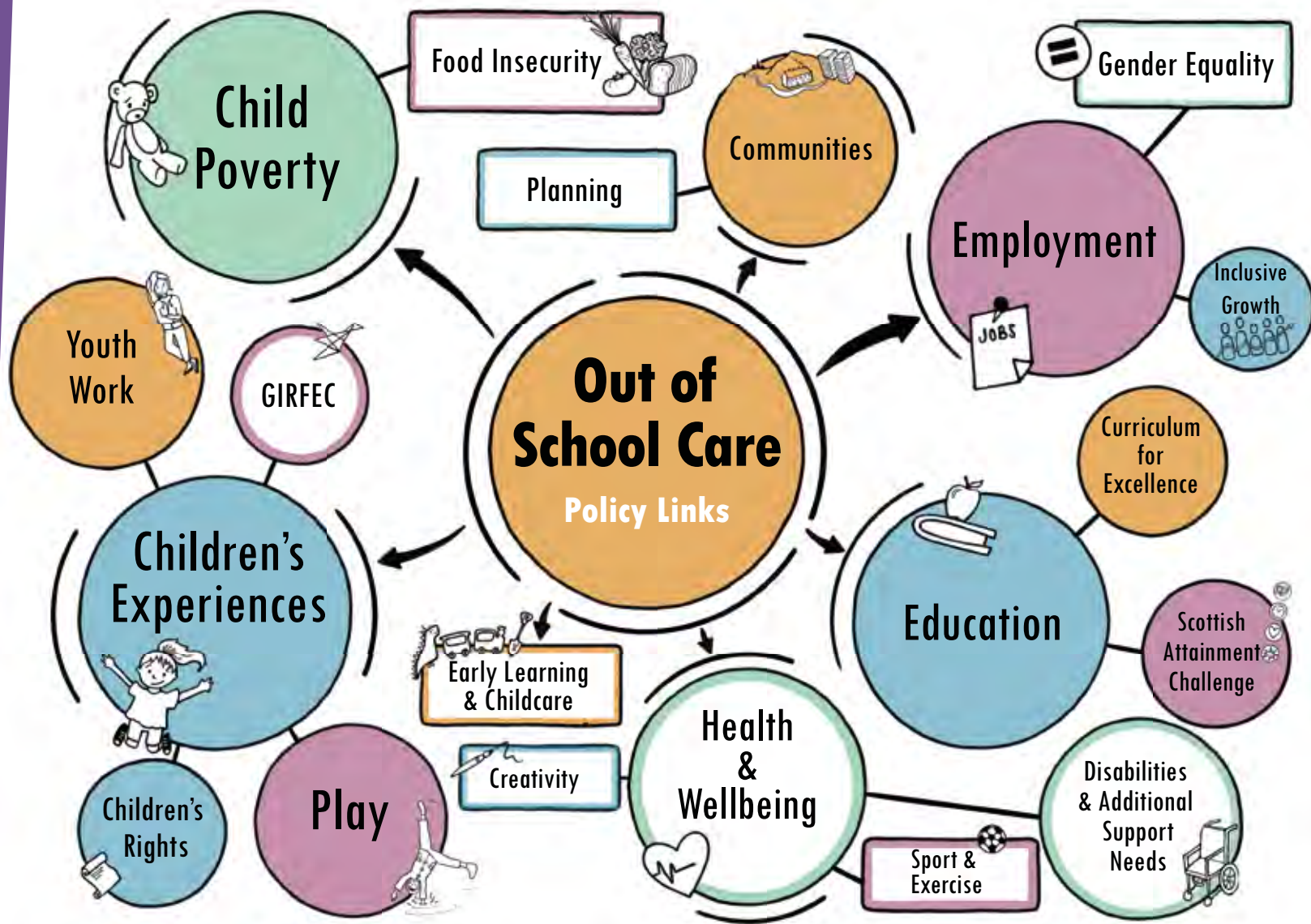


**Figure 2:** Policy links across Scottish Government

# 3. Out of School Care Background and Evidence

## What is Out of School Care?

There is no single formal definition of out of school care in the UK. However, there is a general consensus that out of school care is 'care provided to school-aged children outside of usual school hours and that this care includes child-minding, after-school clubs, holiday clubs and breakfast clubs'[2]

Families use out of school care for a number of reasons, the primary reason being childcare. Out of school care extends the school day to align with a typical working day and during school holiday periods provides full time childcare. However, some parents may also choose to use out of school care because of the experiences that it provides for their child, particularly opportunities to play, socialise and take part in a range of extra-curricular activities as part of a group.

In Scotland there is no general statutory duty on local authorities or any other body to provide out of school and holiday childcare to all children who attend school, although local authorities have the power to provide such care.

However, the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 does place a statutory duty on local authorities to provide day care for school age children in need, before and after school and during holidays.[3] A child is 'in need' where they are of 'in need of care and attention' because of a number of factors related to the child achieving or maintaining a reasonable standard of health or development; or where disability, of the child themselves or a member of their family, affects the child adversely.

The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, placed an additional statutory duty on local authorities to consult with representatives of parents of children in need who are aged five or under and have not yet commenced attendance at a school, on their out of school care needs every two years. Parental involvement and engagement is an important priority for national government, local authorities and individual schools.[4]

The Health and Social Care Standards set out what people should expect when using health, social care or social work services in Scotland – this includes childcare. The objective of the Standards are to drive improvement, promote flexibility and encourage innovation in how people are cared for and supported. The Standards are underpinned by five principles: dignity and respect, compassion, be included, responsive care, and support and wellbeing.

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2   Siraj, Iram and Kingston, Denise, Scottish Government (2015) An independent review of the Scottish early learning and childcare (ELC) workforce and out of school care (OSC) workforce.

3   Being a child in need is defined at section 93(4) of the 1995 Act as being in need of care and attention because the child is unlikely to achieve or maintain, or have the opportunity of achieving or maintaining, a reasonable standard of health or development unless a local authority provides a service, and the child's health or development is likely to be significantly or further impaired, unless such services are provided; or if the child is disabled, or adversely affected by the disability of any other person in their family.

4   Under the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010, where a day care service is provided to children, providers, including local authorities, must register their services with the Care Inspectorate and must conform to their regulatory regime. However, where out of school care is provided in a school and as part of the school's activities, by or on behalf of the school's managers (including a local authority) then this is not considered a day care service under that Act, and the registration and other duties in relation to the Care Inspectorate do not apply.

# Models/Types
## Registered Services

Different delivery models for out of school activities exist. Regulated childcare, defined as a daycare of children service and registered and inspected by the Care Inspectorate. Daycare of children's service applies to services whose primary function is childcare and who operate for 2 hours or more in any one day and for more than 6 days in any one calendar year (as defined in the Public Reform (Scotland) Act 2010). We will refer to these throughout the framework as "registered out of school care services". Staff working within these services require to register with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) and all staff must meet qualifications standards equivalent to those working in early learning and childcare including a degree level qualification for all managers.

According to the Care Inspectorate[5] there are 981 registered out of school care services operating in Scotland. For 738 this is their main service with the remainder also providing childcare for younger children including early learning and childcare. There are also 648 breakfast clubs and 440 registered holiday services. These out of school care services provide care for around 52,550 children in Scotland.

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5    Early Learning and Childcare Statistics 2017, Care
      Inspectorate, November 2018

# CASE STUDY
# Flexible Childcare Services, Dundee

Flexible Childcare Services, Dundee, offers complete flexibility to families, both in our local community, and across Dundee. With space for up to 16 children, we pick up from all schools and transport them to our service. Within Families House, we have a room specifically for our school age children which has direct access to the outside area.

We are situated in a deprived area of Dundee. To support the families, we work on a week to week basis for booking childcare. The families pay for what they book. There are no set sessions, deposits or retainers. If the childcare is not required, the families have to inform us a week in advance and they are not charged. This has supported many of our families to be able to sustain and gain employment, and apply or attend college, due to the flexibility and cost of the service we are providing.

This summer, we have been accessing community fun days and activities. We did not want to add any more pressure onto our families by charging higher costs for children to go on outings. This has been very successful with the staff working together with the children to find experiences for them that are low cost or free of charge. The children have been able to visit a number of the museums within Dundee, which is something that many of them may not have had the opportunity to do previously.

"I have been using Flexible Childcare Services for the last three years. My two who attend the school club get picked up from the school and taken to the service… They are in the garden all the time, which is great as they spend all day in school and it gives them time to wind down and play… Having them at the same service means I am not running around different places to pick them all up. What a service, the children love it and so do I!" (Parent, Dundee)

"We want to show that we can provide a high standard of care at an affordable cost. Parents are able to attend college with childcare that fits around college courses and placements. For working parents, finding childcare that suits different working patterns can be challenging. We offer this service so that parents can work and afford their childcare." (Lesley Tait, Flexible Childcare Services Manager, Dundee)

# CASE STUDY
# St Mirin's
# Out of
# School Club,
# Glasgow



St Mirin's was established in 1996 as a voluntary managed charity. Our club serves communities in the Kings Park and Castlemilk areas within the southside of Glasgow operating from St Mirins Primary School. Our service has consistently been graded as 'Excellent' and was the first out of school care service in Scotland to be awarded the Scottish Out of School Care Network's Aiming High Scotland (AHS) quality assurance award and also the first service to gain Achieving Quality Scotland Gold Award.

As a service, St Mirins put the rights and needs of the children at the forefront of all our work. For example: children approve and sign-off relevant policies which enables them to influence the direction of the service; children host the AGM; children generate questions that they wish to put to the Care Inspectorate; children write letters to new Primary 1 children inviting them in to the service before they start, and they can also complete 'snack assistant' training to become a

snack helper. Children are not only taught about their rights but also the responsibilities that come with this to ensure that others' rights are met.

Play is also very much at the heart of the club and the service supports free-flow play through the premises which allows children to explore, create, and develop better social skills and relationships with peers (and adults too). The staff understand that good quality play experiences and opportunities support children in their development and learning but more than that, they create fun times and happy memories for the future.

"Heather loves coming to after school care and it makes it so much easier as a working parent when this is the case! Often she is enjoying herself so much when I come to pick her up that she wants to carry on what she is doing! She loves the craft activities the most.. She

also enjoys the torches outside when it's dark. Heather's little sister Betsy is looking forward to coming after the summer too". (Parent, St.Mirins)

"Our service is innovative and proactive. Children very much lead the focus and direction of our service. The attention we pay to children's rights has been instrumental in helping us achieve grades of 6 (excellent) with the Care Inspectorate and we have retained these grades for seven years. Our staff turnover is virtually nil and most staff have been here for between 10 and 20 years. Our motto is PRIDE (Personal Responsibility In Delivering Excellence)". (Margaret McLelland, Manager, St Mirins Out of School Club, Glasgow)

Most registered out of school care services (642) are either private, voluntary, third sector or charitable organisations. A minority (96) are delivered directly by the local authority. Out of school care is therefore mainly a community based sector which has grown in response to public demand within individual communities. Out of school clubs are predominantly concentrated in urban areas, with 558 (76%) of these based in 'Large urban' and 'Other urban' areas. We know that providing services in remote and rural areas can be challenging but that the need for provision may well be greater in these areas due to the nature of employment and the requirement for childcare due to commuting time.

The Care Inspectorate childcare statistics provide information on the numbers of services and children attending these services. There has been a rise in the number of out of school care services operating each year since 2012, when there were 686 services. The number of children registered with out of school care services has also been increasing with 52,550 children registered in 2017 compared to 34,530 registered in 2012.

Most children (67%) attending out of school care are in the 7-11 age category.

# CASE STUDY
# Penny Anderson – Director at MACS (Mearns After-School Care Service)

Penny is one of the two founding workers of MACS in 1995. Originally the service operated from one site and provided 24 places. It now provides nine breakfast clubs, 11 out of school care clubs and two holiday care services and is a not-for-profit company employing nearly 100 people and providing care for hundreds of children on a daily basis. Alongside the two other company directors, Penny has been a driving force in constantly developing the organisation.

In addition to providing care services, MACS also delivers training on the Playwork SCQF Level 6 Qualification, Modifying Sensory Environments and is the first training centre in Scotland to deliver the National Progression Award in Forest Kindergarten. Penny believes passionately in developing a skilled and compassionate workforce and she herself continues to lead by example – "knowledge is development". After gaining her BA Childhood Practice at University of Glasgow she continued studying for a Masters and is currently undertaking a doctorate which is looking at recruitment and retention in the workforce.

Penny believes that you need to speak with passion to gain professional recognition but first you need to value yourself and the positive impact that you have on children's lives before anyone else will give you recognition. One of the most important skills is the ability to communicate and network with other sectors.

# Out of School Care Practitioners

According to the Scottish Social Services Council[6] there are 4,850 registered out of school care practitioners working in stand-alone out of school care services in Scotland.

490 workers are employed in the public sector, 1,830 in the private sector, and 2,530 in the voluntary sector.

92% of workers work part time and 8% were full time (more than 30 hours per week).

88% of the workforce are female and 12% are male.

## Childminders

Childminders work from their own homes to provide a childcare service for other people's children in a family setting. These services can be provided before and after school during term time and often full time during school holiday periods. Childminders are regulated and inspected by the Care Inspectorate as a daycare of children service. Childminders do not require to register with the Scottish Social Services Council and do not require to be qualified in order to deliver childcare to school age children (although we know that many childminders do hold childcare, and other relevant qualifications). 16,470 children (age 5-12+) access out of school care with a childminder.

According to Care Inspectorate statistics, there were 5,426 childminding services registered at 31 December 2017[6]. Most of these services (5,300, 98%) told us that they provide a service after school hours.

Across all regulated service types in Scotland (including childminders) 79,200 children aged 5 and over were registered with services for out of school care.

## Activity-based Services

In addition to registered out of school care services there are many supervised activity clubs (including Active Schools clubs, sports, drama and arts and culture focussed clubs) which operate during term time often for less than two hours at the beginning or end of the school day. These do not require to be registered or inspected by the Care Inspectorate.

There are also many holiday clubs which although they operate for more than 2 hours a day, their main function isn't to provide a daycare service for children. Their primary function is to provide activities for children. These clubs are also not required to register with the Care Inspectorate as a daycare of children service and staff are not required to be registered with the Scottish Social Services Council or to be qualified with a childcare qualification. As with childminders, it may be however that staff working within these services are qualified in many cases. Due to the lack of any registration requirement we are currently unable to quantify this provision across Scotland as there is no reliable source of data.

6    Children's Services Workforce 2017, Scottish Social Services Council, January 2019

# CASE STUDY
# Achieve More

Achieve More is a Glasgow based charity providing programmes of activities free of charge to children and young people from low income communities. Working in partnership with local schools Achieve More provides breakfast clubs, lunch time activities, after school clubs and holiday clubs across Glasgow. Currently active in 21 schools, 7 of these partnerships are supported by Pupil Equity Funding and include activities before, during and after the school day. One of these schools is Haghill Park Primary, based in Glasgow's East End.

*"We began working with Haghill Park Primary School following discussions with the head teacher regarding a comprehensive programme of breakfast, lunch-time, curriculum and after schools activities. All activities are based upon the needs and wants of the children participating, with a focus on improving their physical and mental health and well-being, attendance and learning. At present over 80 children attend the sessions every day. Direct feedback from parents and teachers has been resoundingly positive and the children themselves have made clear how much they are enjoying the sessions. In summer 2018 we delivered holiday camp activities based at the school, which was free for all children aged 5-16 to attend, with transport and a hot lunch provided. Over 180 children participated in the camp, with over 100 turning up each day. This year we have over 350 children attending our summer activities everyday. All children receive breakfast, lunch and four hours (minimum) of physical activity"*. Robert McHarg, Achieve More, Chief Executive

*"We have been working with Achieve More Scotland since early 2018. Our aim was to improve the health and wellbeing of our young people, and we wanted to challenge their boundaries and encourage them to be more active. The impact has been improved pupils' fitness, mental health, attendance and their overall behaviour and learning in the classroom".* Shelagh Delahunt, Head teacher of Haghill Park Primary school.

**Q1**: What range of services are needed: regulated out of school care, childminders, activity-based clubs and programmes such as sports clubs, creative arts clubs, outdoor activities, other types of activities?

Can you tell us why these services are important?

**Q2**: What can we do to support community based approaches to delivering out of school care?

## Cost of Out of School Care Provision

The cost of childcare in Scotland is influenced by a number of factors. The 2019 Coram Childcare Survey report notes that the average weekly price of an after school club for children age 5-11 in Scotland is £54 per child and the weekly price of a childminder until 6pm for children age 5-11 in Scotland is £68 per child.

The 2019 Coram Holiday Childcare Survey report notes that the weekly price of holiday childcare is £123 per child in Scotland.

Upfront childcare costs – which can include deposits, administration fees and the payment of fees in advance are common amongst childcare providers.

## Support with Costs

Support with childcare costs is available for qualifying families through UK Working Tax Credit (WTC) or Universal Credit (UC). WTC and UC are aimed at lower income parents.

WTC is a legacy benefit that has now been replaced by Universal Credit for most people. The childcare element is designed to meet up to 70% of the total cost, depending on circumstances and household income.

The childcare element of UC enables eligible parents to claim back up to 85% of childcare costs within a monthly limit of £646.35 for one child or £1,108.04 for two or more children. Claimants must pay for childcare up-front, and then claim a reimbursement from the Department for Work and Pensions once it has been provided. The reimbursement is paid in arrears as part of the claimant's UC award each month. Earlier this year, the Flexible Support Fund was announced to help parents whose initial month of childcare costs was inhibiting parents from transitioning into employment.

Parents can only receive support with childcare costs through UC if they:
- Receive UC child support for their child,
- Are in paid work, or
- Have accepted an offer of paid work, and
- Pay for childcare because of this work.

In general, only working single parents or couples where both partners work can claim childcare entitlement, although there are some exceptions.

Support with childcare costs is available for families with a higher household income through childcare vouchers or tax-free childcare. Childcare vouchers are currently being phased out, and the scheme closed to new members in October 2018.

Tax-free childcare is replacing childcare vouchers. Through this scheme, UK Government pays £2 for every £8 that eligible parents pay to childcare providers, up to a limit of £500 every three months or £2,000 per year. This scheme is for working parents with a minimum income threshold – in a two parent family, both parents must be working although some exclusions apply. Parents can claim support for children aged 11 or under, and they must usually live with the person claiming. Parents of eligible disabled children can claim up to £4,000 per year until the age of 17. Claimants cannot benefit from tax-free childcare at the same time as Working Tax Credit, Universal Credit or childcare vouchers.

Targeted support with childcare costs is available for certain groups, including, for example, students. Students at colleges and universities receive support with the cost of childcare through the College and University Childcare Funds and the Further Education and Higher Education Discretionary Funds which have been allocated by Scottish Ministers. These funds are available to all eligible students with

childcare responsibilities. The funds provide assistance with the cost of formal registered childcare expenses. They do not place limits on the amounts individuals can access and give institutions the flexibility to determine award levels themselves.

The various forms of support to help with childcare costs can only be used with childcare providers registered with the Care Inspectorate. As described above, activity based services are not required to register as childcare providers. This means that families are unable to claim support to help cover the costs of accessing these services.

Compared to early years research, where there is a strong evidence base on the impact of early learning and childcare and the home learning environment, the evidence related to out of school childcare and activities for school-age children is fairly limited. We have summarised what we know about the evidence on out of school care in a working paper (Annex A) and highlighted the main points from this below.

**The available evidence suggests** that the main potential impact of out of school care on parents and the broader family is through positive labour market impacts. Out of school care allows some parents, especially single parents and those not in work, to remain in or secure employment, increase working hours or undertake further education or training.

For low income families, school holidays can increase financial pressure and may lead to food insecurity and missing out on opportunities that are available to children in higher income families. The cost of childcare during school holidays may also put pressure on family budgets or make sustaining work difficult, particularly for lone parents. There is some research that suggests that circumstances experienced during the school holidays – including poor nutrition, social isolation and stress within the family – can negatively impact on children's school readiness, cognitive functioning, health and well-being.

Access to affordable and accessible childcare for school-age children has been highlighted by some research as a potential barrier to taking up or staying in good quality employment, or increasing hours. Costs of childcare may also put pressure on family budgets, and low income families may find accessing the financial support available difficult.

**There is also some evidence showing** that out of school activities/programmes can have small positive impacts on a range of children's outcomes and indicate that they could play a role in reducing the attainment gap.

**The limited evidence available** also suggests that high quality out of school care may benefit children by promoting positive social interactions and relationships, building social skills and confidence, and providing the opportunity for play in a safe environment, particularly for younger children and those from the most socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds.

**While there is a lack of robust evaluation of holiday programmes**, the existing small-scale evaluations do show a range of potential positive impacts for the children and families who attend, including tackling food insecurity, and wider health and wellbeing, educational, and financial impacts.

## 4. Creating a vision

## OUT OF SCHOOL CARE REFERENCE GROUP

We established an out of school care reference group in order to support our policy development and ensure we created our framework collaboratively working with the out of school care sector, local authorities, organisations with an interest in children's outcomes and colleagues across the Scottish Government.

The full membership of the Out of School Care reference group is listed at Annex C.

## WHO IS OUT OF SCHOOL CARE FOR?

The group discussed the wide range of out of school care which exists across Scotland, including the childcare sector, childminders, activity based clubs and programmes, and holiday clubs. They considered what out of school care is and who it's for, agreeing that it should be for all school aged children and that all children and families should be able to access it if they choose. They considered the term out of school care and wondered whether this is the right descriptor, particularly in relation to holiday childcare. The group discussed the fact that this terminology may not be widely understood and reference group members offered a range of terms used around the world including after school childcare and school aged childcare. They noted that many clubs prefer to remove the reference to school and that this is often at the request of the children attending.

**Q3**: What name should we use for the range of out of school services and activities? Is there a better term than 'Out of School Care'?

## VISION

Thinking about the range of positive benefits to children and families, the group created a collaborative and bold vision for out of school care in Scotland.
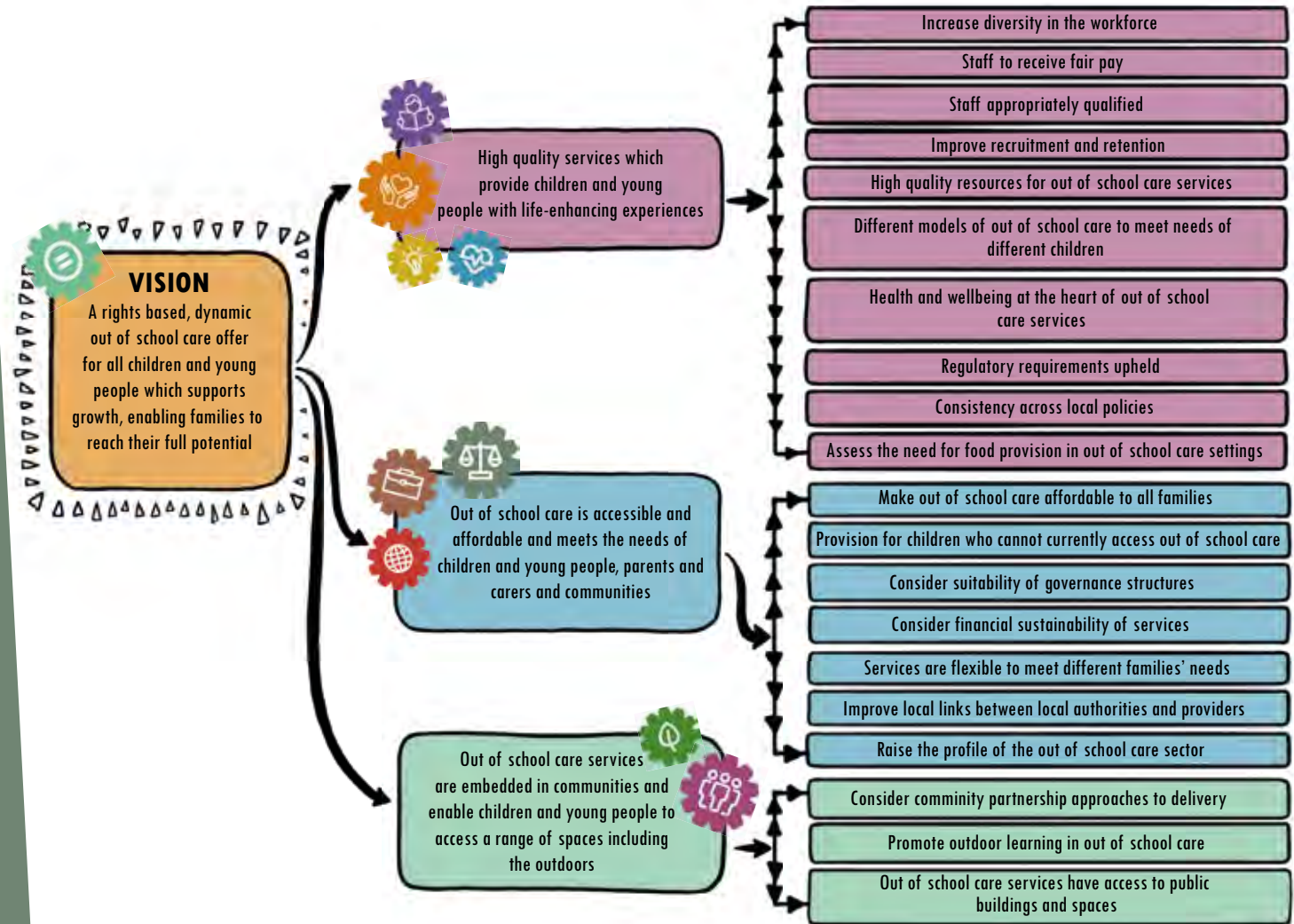
**Our vision is "A rights based dynamic offer for all children and young people which supports choice and growth enabling families and communities to reach their full potential".**

This vision focuses on positive outcomes for children, recognising a child's right to play, the importance of feeling included and part of a community and how vital it is that there is equality of opportunity for all children in respect of these experiences.

It also clearly links to the importance of families and communities being able to grow and reach their full potential and the support required to be able to achieve this.

The group also considered the ideal out of school care. They were ambitious in their thinking and noted a range of key attributes which are essential for delivering high quality out of school care with the children at the centre. These discussions focussed on what's important about out of school care, the benefits it delivers for children and families and what more could be done to widen access, particularly for those who don't currently use out of school care. They discussed how this might provide support for families and improve outcomes for some children. The group thought about the current situation and the key shifts and changes required to deliver the vision.

Figure 3 "Realising the Vision; mapping out the drivers of change" sets out the relationship between the vision, our primary aims and the requirements for delivering change and achieving the vision. The group agreed that these core aims are essential considerations for a future framework.



**VISION**
A rights based, dynamic out of school care offer for all children and young people which supports growth, enabling families to reach their full potential

High quality services which provide children and young people with life-enhancing experiences

- Increase diversity in the workforce
- Staff to receive fair pay
- Staff appropriately qualified
- Improve recruitment and retention
- High quality resources for out of school care services
- Different models of out of school care to meet needs of different children
- Health and wellbeing at the heart of out of school care services
- Regulatory requirements upheld
- Consistency across local policies
- Assess the need for food provision in out of school care settings

Out of school care is accessible and affordable and meets the needs of children and young people, parents and carers and communities

- Make out of school care affordable to all families
- Provision for children who cannot currently access out of school care
- Consider suitability of governance structures
- Consider financial sustainability of services
- Services are flexible to meet different families' needs
- Improve local links between local authorities and providers
- Raise the profile of the out of school care sector

Out of school care services are embedded in communities and enable children and young people to access a range of spaces including the outdoors

- Consider comminity partnership approaches to delivery
- Promote outdoor learning in out of school care
- Out of school care services have access to public buildings and spaces

## Links to National Performance Framework

We mapped our vision to the National Performance Framework linking our key aims to the national outcomes. To achieve our national outcomes, we aim to get everyone in Scotland to work together. This includes national and local government, businesses, voluntary organisations and people living in Scotland. In order to deliver our vision and our key aims, we will require collaborative working across communities, involving all those with an interest.

We have thriving and innovative businesses with quality jobs and fair work for everyone

We have a globally competitive, entrepreneurial, inclusive and sustainable economy

We tackle poverty by sharing opportunities, wealth and power more equally

We respect, protect and fulfil human rights and live free from discrimination

Out of school care is accessible and affordable, meeting the needs of children and young people, parents, carers and communities

We grow up loved, safe and respected so that we realise our full potential

**VISION**
A rights-based, dynamic out of school care offer for all children and young people which supports choice and growth, enabling families and communities to reach their full potential

Out of school care services are embedded in communities and enable children and young people to access a range of spaces, including the outdoors

We are open, connected and make a positive contribution internationally

High quality services which provide children and young people with life-enhancing experiences

We are well educated, skilled and able to contribute to society

We value, enjoy, protect and enhance our environment

We are healthy and active

We are creative and our vibrant, diverse cultures are expressed and enjoyed widely

We live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe

**Figure 4:** Links to the National Performance Framework

With a clear vision and guided by the National Performance Framework, and the strong links to our national outcomes and to wider policies across Scottish Government, our new framework will focus on positive outcomes for those children and families who stand to benefit most from access to out of school care.

It is important to understand how we can use this vision and our key aims to create an out of school care policy which better meets the needs of children and families in Scotland. In order to do that it is important to listen, to recognise the issues and to act upon those to make a difference.



**04**: To enable us to realise our vision, we have identified three key aims that we will need to achieve:

**1. High quality services which provide children with life-enhancing experiences**

**2. Out of school care is accessible and affordable and meets the needs of children and young people, parents and carers and communities.**

**3. Out of school care services are embedded in communities and enable children and young people to access a range of spaces including the outdoors**

Do you agree with our 3 key aims for a future out of school care framework?

Yes/ No. Please explain your response.

## 5. What do people think?

This draft framework is the product of a period of extensive engagement, listening to those with an interest in out of school care over a period of nine months. We would like to continue this listening process as we develop our policies and have used the voices of those we've engaged with to demonstrate the impact of out of school care, the current picture in Scotland and what might need to improve in order for us to be able to deliver our bold vision.

### Local Authorities

From September 2018 to January 2019, the Out of School Care policy team contacted each local authority in Scotland to informally discuss out of school care provision and policies and guidance at a local level. All local authorities were contacted by telephone or email in an effort to gather general information on out of school care provision across the country. From these discussions we gained a good understanding of the variety of approaches to out of school care taken in different authorities across Scotland.

Our discussions informed us that across Scotland there is a wide range of support for out of school care within local authorities. Some local authorities have created council-level policies or guidance for out of school care but many councils do not have such formal arrangements. There also appears to be variation across the country on as to the ways in which policies are developed and implemented, where out of school care policy sits and what's included in any support offered. Support comes in many forms including free access to training, subsidised training costs, advice services, free or subsidised school lets and grants to support running costs.

Some local authorities are providing out of school care services directly, although often in small numbers. Local authority provision is generally not widely available and private and voluntary sector organisations provide the majority of services. A small number of authorities noted that they have specialist services which provide out of school care for children with additional support needs and disabilities.

A number of local authorities noted the challenges of providing out of school care in remote rural areas, where there may only be a small number of children and highlighting that it can be very difficult to run sustainable business models in these cases.

# CASE STUDY
## Glasgow City Council

**Heather Douglas,** Early Learning and Childcare Manager

Glasgow has invested in out of school childcare for many years offering a range of support to 90 services operating from 51 Glasgow schools and 39 other community buildings, providing places for around 5,000 children. We understand that a family's need for high quality, affordable, reliable childcare is a continuum – beginning in early years and extending throughout primary school (and sometimes beyond).

Childcare is a community planning priority for Glasgow, where its fundamental importance in supporting inclusive growth is recognised along with the role it plays in helping Glasgow families to take up and maintain employment, secure in the knowledge that their children are being well cared for.

### Quality Improvement

GCC has improved quality in OSC services by funding the Scottish Out of School Network to support services to access the "Achieving Quality Scotland" Quality Improvement framework.

As a direct impact of this investment, 42% of Glasgow OSC services achieve Very Good/Excellent at inspection against a national average of 25%.

### Practice Support

GCC supports seven local Childcare Forums to provide a peer network, share practice and maximise funding opportunities. Each forum has a specific OSC sub-group.

The Council also provides funding to support the OSC workforce to access certificated qualifications (up to 70% of cost), ongoing CPD and an annual conference attended by 180 OSC staff.

### Innovation and New Services

GCC is keen to support new services and innovative practice to benefit children and families. Riverbank PS, our newest Glasgow school in the heart of the East End, will host an OSC service when it opens in August 2019.

One of the city's providers also runs a longstanding teenage OSC service, which also supports young people into employment. Conversations are also taking place in a number of areas to expand outdoor provision.

### Financial Support

GCC supports OSC services to access school premises by offering subsidised lets. This support amounts to over £344,000 annually.

Many OSC services also access grant funding via the Council through both the Integrated Grant Fund and small Local Area Grants totalling c. £250,000 per year.

A team of community focused officers within the central Early Learning & Childcare Team has a remit to support OSC with funding and practice issues.

# CASE STUDY Aberdeen City Council



Aberdeen City Council's approach to childcare policy recognises the importance of out of school care for ensuring equity and equality for families and positive outcomes for all children. We regularly review, consult and update our policies, adopting a partnership approach with providers to ensure we are delivering high quality, flexible and affordable out of school care provision which meets the needs of children and parents.

**Supporting Out of School Care in Aberdeen**

Out of school care is delivered jointly by the local authority and partner private and third sector providers. The majority of settings are based in schools and we offer free lets in our buildings to out of school care providers - including cleaning and janitorial services. We also support the development of new provision in the city and ongoing training for staff.

In our priority localities and areas of deprivation, Aberdeen City Council offers subsidy grants to support the costs of out of school care so that it's affordable for parents on low incomes or in education and training. As a result, high quality out of school care is accessible to all families.

In fulfilment of the requirements set out in the Children and Young People (2014) Act, regular consultation with parents and children gives us the opportunity to hear their views on local out of school care provision and ensures we are meeting their needs.

# FOCUS ON CHILDREN

Children and young people have the right to take part in and influence decisions on issues that affect them, as set out in Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Scottish Government is committed to ensuring that children and young people are at the heart of decision-making. We want to ensure that future policy on out of school care meets the needs of all children, and is shaped by their views, interests and feelings about out of school care.

## How we Heard

We delivered a series of theatre workshops with after school clubs and youth groups to gather views on what children like to do after school and in the holidays. We have also included data from a recent survey conducted by the Scottish Out of School Care Network.

## What We Heard

The Scottish Out of School Care Network (SOSCN) undertook a consultation with children attending out of school care settings across Scotland from summer 2017 to summer 2018. 652 children participated aged from 4 to 15.[8]

"Playing with my friends and doing new things." (Boy, 10)

"We have lots of fun and the staff and children look out for each other. We have lots of fun there; the staff are funny. We make friends at the club. The staff help other children and it runs very well." (Boy, 11)

"You can play with your favourite toys and hang out with your buddies". (Boy, 7)

"Having fun with spare time and making dens with blankets." (Girl, 10)

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8    "Fun! FUN! Super fun! - Children's thoughts on OSC"
     https://soscn.org/downloads/reports/SOSCN_fun_fun_super_fun_childrens_survey_
     january_2019.pdf

Overall children were very positive about their experiences of attending out of school care:

**87%** of children agreed that the staff care about children in the club and listen to them.

**88%** of children agreed that they know they can ask staff if they need help or have a worry.

**78%** of children agreed that they mostly enjoy being with other children at the club.

**76%** of children agreed that they are quite happy at the club.

**74%** agreed that they can choose what play and games they do at the club.

According to the children's responses, the 'top 5' best things about out of school care are:

- Play/playing (34% of children)
- Friends (19% of children)
- Toys/games available (11% of children)
- Snack/food provided (7% of children)
- Going outside/outdoors (7% of children)

According to the children's responses, the 'top 5' things that could be better about out of school care are:

- Nothing (16% of children)
- Better/more toys/games (11% of children)
- Better play opportunities (6% of children)
- Better snack/food (6% of children)
- Going outside more (5% of children)
- Going on trips (5% of children)

"It's amazing: I can speak to staff about my worries. I like how we are involved with new changes at a club. I love making new friends I enjoy going on trips. I like how Brenda teaches us new games." (Girl, 10)

"Nothing - the club is perfect." (Boy describing what could be better about out of school care)

## Active Inquiry Workshops – engaging children through theatre

Creative methods often help to maximise engagement with children and young people. We connected with arts and theatre company, Active Inquiry, to help us design and deliver theatre workshops which would help children express their views creatively. Active Inquiry works with communities to engage with democratic processes and decisions which affect their lives through theatre. Communicating through drama enabled the children to find different ways other than verbal to explore and present ideas. Using fictional scenarios, children were given ownership of the process and encouraged to be bold with their ideas. The drama helped generate rich ideas which provided insight into their interests, and their wishes for activities after school and during the holidays.

> "You need fresh air and exercise as well as just learning."

We ran workshops in four after school clubs, with children aged between 5 and 11 years, and one youth club with young people aged between 11-16 years, in Glasgow, Newton Mearns and Edinburgh. Children were asked to imagine that they lived on a fictional island where school days are long and there are no summer holidays. Using a series of games, tasks and scenarios, children explored questions around their time out of school – why it's important to have time away from the classroom, what sort of activities they like to do and what kinds of adults they would like to work with them during these times away from school.

> "The forest is fun, you can make dens"

## The importance of time away from school

Children and young people noted that they have a right to free time away from school and recognised that it was important to have breaks from classroom-based learning. They said that it's important for young people to take part in healthy, active sports which will give them a balanced lifestyle. Children stressed that they need time for playing with friends and that they should have opportunities to do "new and different things", to go to new places and to have fun. Children highlighted that there are many learning opportunities beyond the classroom such as outdoor activities, learning by doing, and learning from others when they get the opportunity to meet new people who can share their different experiences.

## Activities for after school and in the holidays

Children and young people explored a wide range of activities they would like to have access to after school and in the summer. Using theatre, they expressed their ideas through performance and explained the reasoning behind their choices. The activities that children suggested fell into the eight categories in the table below.

**Trips and travel** was a key theme that came out strongly in the drama workshops. Children were keen to visit different places – from local parks, to further afield places such as beaches and woods, to trips abroad – and to meet people from different areas and cultures. Through the drama children showed that meeting new people, making friends and learning about difference was important to them.

The children we spoke to had a strong awareness of the importance of **physical and mental health** – sports and exercise came across as some of the most popular activities and children were well-aware of the importance of physical fitness and the benefits for mental health when you get to experience something that you enjoy and have the ability to relax.

**Relationships** were highlighted by many of the children and young people. They showed that they would like to spend much of their time outside of school with family, friends and trusted, supportive staff. It was also important to them that they had opportunities to do different activities with members of their family. They saw these

relationships as important for support, especially in helping them to feel better when they find things difficult.

**Play** was a key theme in all of the drama workshops. Children and young people want opportunities to have fun doing a range of varied activities and by being allowed time to use their own imaginations. They frequently expressed that they wanted to have freedom and choice, to be able to spend their time how they would like to.

Computer games and activities where children could learn or **develop skills** also came across as popular activities. They said that it was good to learn in different ways, outside of the classroom. Some of the children considered their future careers and connected their ideas for after school activities to the sort of jobs they would like to do when they grow up.

Overall, children felt that the activities they suggested were important because they needed something fun and different to school, they wanted to have an opportunity to do a variety of activities and learn while having fun and doing practical or physical activities.

> "Kids need to explore new places and get out to do things they've never done before."

| Type of activity | Examples | Reasons |
|---|---|---|
| Sports/exercise | Swimming, gymnastics, surfing, abseiling, running, basketball, football, archery, dancing, tennis, golf, netball, volleyball, boxing, cycling | Being healthy and active is good for your health.<br><br>It's important to be healthy and active, it uses your energy and it's fun. |
| Arts | Drawing, drama, band, music, singing, art, design, crafts | To have fun. |
| Learning new skills | Reading, writing, sign language, history, making clothes, weaving, inventing a machine, learning about different jobs, training, debating, coding, science club | Sign language is a good skill to have and helps you communicate with people who are deaf.<br><br>"If you have someone deaf in your family it means you can talk to them."<br><br>It's fun to learn new skills. |
| Trips/Travel | Going to the park, swimming, fun places, going abroad, travelling to other countries, museums, cinema, shopping, theme parks, Waterstones, ice-skating, bowling, laser tag, bus trips, using different modes of transport | Children repeatedly talked about the importance of variety: doing new and different things. They wanted to explore new places, meet new people and learn about different cultures and communities. Children said that in some cases children may not have had opportunities to travel or to use different types of transport and they should have a chance to experience new things. |
| Outdoors | Playing outside, beach days, camping, going to the park, going to the woods, building dens | To have fun, to see new places. |

## Important qualities for staff

Children had discussions about the sort of adults they would like to work with them to support them and care for them during free time after school and in the holidays. They said they would like:

"Somebody fun."

"Somebody who knows how to do lots of things so they can help you learn and have fun."

"People who are kind and caring and care more about things than just school."

"Someone who is sporty and does exercise."

"I feel like I can talk to them more than my teachers and I can trust them more."

"They're not as strict as teachers, you're less likely to get in trouble."

"They need to be flexible with their time and be nice to the children."

| Type of activity | Examples | Reasons |
|---|---|---|
| Relationships | Family days, spending time with family, playing with friends, meeting new people and making new friends, socialising | Being able to talk to people about what you're feeling and how you're doing is important. It's good to have people you can turn to if something happens.

To have fun and relax away from school.

Being able to talk to people about what you're feeling and how you're doing is important. It's good to have people you can turn to if something happens." |
| Food | Cooking, baking, learning recipes, eating | Children described cooking as a fun activity where they could learn something, but also wanted to have tasty food to eat and to share. |
| Play/Games/Computers | Xbox, Fifa, Apex, Call of Duty, Realm Royale, Chess, imagination room, dressing-up clothes, lots of different activities, toys | "We should get infinite play time". |
| Other | Going home, films, scripture union, zoo workshops, shopping days, votes for kids, helping in the house, pampering | Some children noted specific activities which they enjoy, but did not necessarily have wide appeal across the groups. |

## Reflections

Through a variety of methods, children and young people were able to tell us about their experiences of out of school care and about the broader range of activities which they enjoy and which enhance their lives. They articulated well the positive benefits which access to activities and support from trusted adults can deliver and the importance of having a safe space where they can relax, play, socialise and feel at home. We will continue to gather and understand children and young people's views about what's important to them in their time out of school and during the holidays to ensure that this helps shape our developing policy.

**Q5**: How can we help to ensure that all families have access to an out of school care place for their child/ren if they want it?

**Q6**: What do children and young people want from out of school care services and does this differ dependent on age?

**Q7**: What different activities or provision might secondary school aged children want?

# FOCUS ON PARENTS

During Spring 2019, we gathered information from parents across Scotland about their thoughts on out of school care, learning about the needs of their families and hearing their vision for the future.

## How We Heard

We did this in three ways in April 2019:

- We commissioned the social research institute, Ipsos Mori, to conduct a large scale piece of research to find out how out of school care is currently being used in Scotland. We wanted to know what types of out of school care provision families are using, what other childcare arrangements may be in place, and gain a better understanding of the reasons underpinning these choices.

- We considered the findings from the Scottish Out of School Care Network's survey of parents and carers who are currently users of registered out of school care services.

- We also carried out a series of events to meet with parents from around the country to hear their views in greater detail.

The evidence presented here and the questions that we will be consulting on have been developed in partnership with parents, as they reflect on the priorities of their own families.

## What We Heard

Ipsos Mori surveyed over 2,000 parents of children aged 5-13 in Scotland – both users and non-users of school care – to understand their views of school age childcare.

Specifically, the research looked at:

- the proportion of parents who use out-of-school care and what types of out-of-school care they use

- whether parents find out-of-school care accessible and affordable and what barriers exist to accessing out-of-school care

- the reasons parents use out-of-school care and whether affordable and accessible out-of-school care supports parents to engage in work, training, or study

- why some parents don't currently access out-of-school care, whether they would like to access it and, if so, why

- how important it is for parents that out-of-school care includes food provision and whether they see benefits from there being food provision at out-of-school care.

This survey was carried out over the phone and took an average of six and a half minutes. It is also worth noting that 70% of the respondents were female. The full report is available at https://www.gov.scot/isbn/9781839600975.

## Summary of Survey findings

The use of out of school childcare was similar across both term-time and the school holidays, with more than half of parents using term-time care (58%) and holiday childcare (61%). Half of all parents (50%) used both, while 23% used neither.
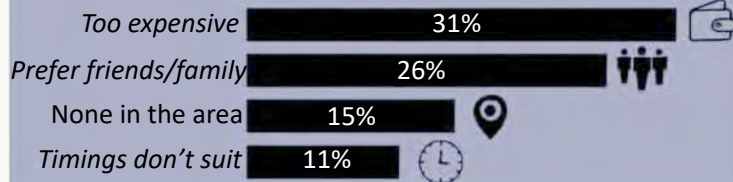
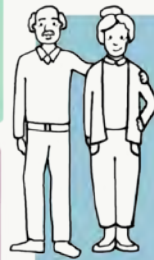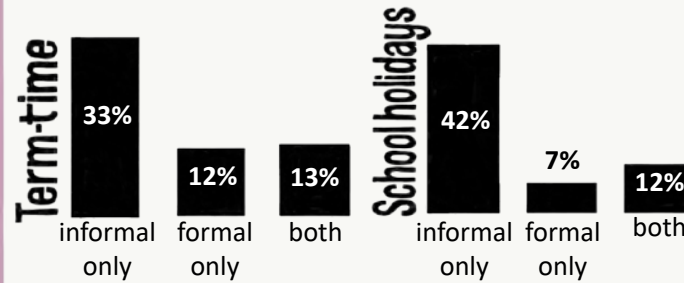Families in which all parents were working were the most likely to use out of school care and, relatedly, by far the main reason for using it was to allow parents to work. Those least likely to use out of school care were families earning less than £20,000 per annum, those living in the most deprived areas (SIMD 1) and larger families (with three or more children). The main reason parents gave for not using out of school care was that is was not currently needed, since they/their partner could look after the child.

Grandparents were the most commonly used type of out of school care (used by 37% of all parents during term-time and 43% during school holidays). Previous research has shown the benefits of this type of care include allowing the grandparent(s) to spend time with the child, and providing parents with convenient, flexible, cost-free childcare[9]. However, a reliance on

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9    For example: Eunson, J. and Murray, L. Early Learning and Childcare: experiences of parents. Audit Scotland (2017). Available at: https://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/uploads/docs/report/2018/nr_180215_early_learning_supp.pdf and;
    Statham, J. Grandparents providing child care. Department of Education (2011). Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/181364/CWRC-00083-2011.pdf

grandparents to provide childcare can also be problematic for parents. For example, it can cause difficulties if grandparents have other commitments or are away or ill, while parents can feel guilty about relying on grandparents, particularly as they get older and/or if they have health problems. Therefore, the availability of other forms of affordable and accessible childcare is important to help reduce any burden upon grandparents providing childcare.

In terms of the use of formal childcare, similar proportions used breakfast clubs (13%), after-school clubs (14%) and holiday clubs/playschemes (16%). These types of childcare were used mostly for younger children (aged 5 to 7). Further, use of breakfast clubs was more common among those living in the most deprived areas (SIMD 1), most likely due to the introduction of free or subsidised breakfast club schemes in these areas by local councils.

Meanwhile after-school clubs and holiday clubs/playschemes were used more by families in the least deprived areas (SIMD 5) or on a higher income (more than £60,000 per annum).

Users' views highlighted that the convenience and affordability of formal care is crucial in ensuring access to these services. Some of the main reasons parents gave for not using these services were because they were unaffordable and/or difficult to access (due to location or unsuitable timings). It should be noted however that those most likely to use formal childcare tended to be families in which all parents were working, those on a higher income, and/or living in the least deprived areas, and so consequently more likely to agree that they were affordable.

The provision of free or subsidised food was more likely to be a reason parents used breakfast clubs than after-school or playschemes/holiday clubs. Just over a third (35%) of breakfast club users agreed that free or subsidised food was a reason they used the club. In comparison, 16% of after-school club and 11% of playscheme or holiday club users said one of the reasons they used these clubs was for the provision of food. Single parents and those living in the most deprived areas (SIMD 1) were more likely to use term-time and holiday care for the provision of free or subsidised food.

**58%** of all parents used term-time care

**61%** of all parents used holiday care

Half of all parents used both term-time and holiday care while 23% used neither.

Families in which all parents are working were **most likely** to use out of school care and by far the main reason for using it was to allow parents to work.

Those **least likely** to use out of school care were families with at least one non-working parent, families earning less than £20,000 per annum, those living in deprived areas (SIMD 1), and larger families with three or more children.

The use of formal and informal care was fairly similar across term-time and school holidays with more parents using informal care than formal care:

**Term-time**
- informal only **33%**
- formal only **12%**
- both **13%**

**School holidays**
- informal only **42%**
- formal only **7%**
- both **12%**

Overall, **grandparents** were the most commonly used type of out of school care used by 37% of parents during term time and 43% during school holidays.

The use of breakfast clubs was more common among those living in the most deprived areas.

The use of after school clubs and holiday clubs or playschemes was most common among families in the least deprived areas or on a higher income.

Those living in remote rural areas were more likely to say that there were no nearby, affordable breakfast clubs, after school clubs, holiday clubs or playschemes.

Among parents who said that there were playschemes and holiday clubs near to them, 64% said they were affordable, 21% said it was not affordable and 14% did not know.

Among those with none nearby, those most interested in using an affordable playsheme or holiday club were families with an income of £20,000 or less per annum, single parents and parents whose child was aged 5-7.

**13%** of parents used breakfast clubs

**14%** of parents used after school clubs

**16%** of parents used holiday clubs or playschemes

Term-time childcare users who did not use breakfast or after school clubs said this was because:

- Too expensive **31%**
- Prefer friends/family **26%**
- None in the area **15%**
- Timings don't suit **11%**

Parents who did not use any term-time care said they would be interested in using affordable breakfast clubs and after school clubs:

- To allow me/my partner to work **43%**
- To give my child the chance to spend time with other children **27%**
- To give my child the chance to do other activities **26%**
- To allow me/my partner to work more hours **19%**
- To give me/my partner the chance to do other things **7%**
- To allow me/my partner to study/train **3%**
- To access free/subsidised food **1%**
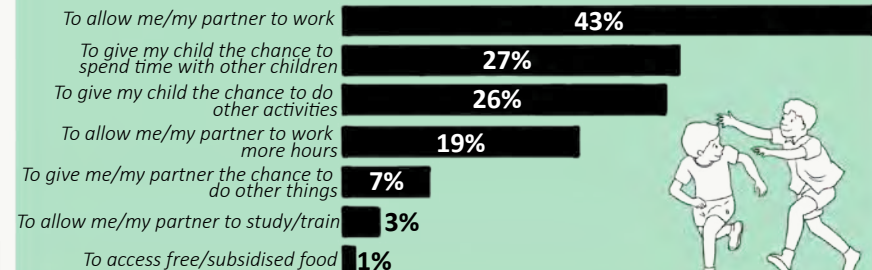
## Parent/Carer Workshops

We spoke to a wide range of parents as part of our direct engagement including:

- parent representatives from across all local authorities in Scotland (working with the National Parent Forum Scotland)

- parents in Dundee, including a group of parents with children with disabilities or additional support needs (working with Dundee City Council)

- single parent families in Glasgow (working with One Parent Families Scotland)

- kinship carers in Edinburgh (working with Mentor's Kinship Care Advisory Group)

- parents with lived experience of poverty (working with the Poverty Truth Community)

- parents from communities in the West of Scotland (working with Parent Network Scotland)

- single parent families from across Glasgow and North & South Lanarkshire (working with One Parent Families Scotland)

Parents were keen to share their stories and suggested innovative solutions to some of the challenges and barriers that they face in accessing childcare during term time and school holidays.

## Accessibility and Affordability

In line with our survey results, many of the parents we spoke to identified affordability as the biggest barrier to accessing childcare. Many parents told us that it would not be possible to pay for out of school care from their wages, or wages that they could expect to earn. Low income parents also told us that it could be challenging to find out about free or low cost activities in their local area, and have struggled in the past to secure a place for their child particularly during school holidays.

Parents highlighted that affordability is a particular issue for families with more than one child. While it might be affordable to send one child to a breakfast club or other out of school care service, once other siblings reached school age, parents told us that it would no longer be affordable. For working parents, this could mean no longer having access to affordable childcare, and children being unable to attend clubs with their friends.

"I just couldn't afford it, not on the wages I could earn" (single parent on the costs of OSC)

For parents currently studying, support with childcare was generally being provided by colleges and universities. Parents described this as playing a crucial role in enabling them to complete their courses and gain a qualification. However, for parents who were approaching the end of their studies, the transition to work (including managing the cost of childcare) seemed like a daunting prospect. In this space, we know there are a number of third sector organisations providing crucial long term support to help manage transitions into work in a diverse range of circumstances.

In both rural and urban communities, parents told us that transport costs amplify issues relating to accessing affordable childcare. Because of this, there was a clear preference for childcare settings to be local. This may mean that parents have to balance their choice of what their child can attend with what is convenient to access. The costs of transport can be particularly challenging in rural communities, where there may not be any local provision.

All parents we spoke to just wanted childcare to be affordable and related to their income in some way. Overwhelmingly, parents who weren't in employment told us they would like to work and those who worked part time told us they would like to be able to increase their hours. The transition from study to working and from unemployment to taking up work was highlighted as a particularly difficult time.

Kinship carers said that respite was very important for them and that more out of school care could help them with this as a family, particularly for lone kinship carers. One carer commented that if out of school care was more accessible it could open opportunities for employment which are currently out of reach for him.

Members of the Poverty Truth Community also shared other challenges that childcare might alleviate if it were more accessible, specifically the stress of looking after children and managing other commitments, navigating the Universal Credit system and a lack of flexibility from employers. Members stressed that more flexible, affordable childcare could enable them to find work, or better work and working hours, and would alleviate stress in their lives.

## Flexibility

The flexibility of childcare often impacts on affordability, and also has important repercussions for parents' employability. Out of school care in its current form tends to be available between the hours of 7:30am and 6pm. Holiday activities that are subsidised (and sometimes used as childcare) tend to vary in hours, and overall, offer fewer hours. However, these activities may be free or low cost, and meals and snacks might be provided. It was recognised there was a huge variation in the services and activities available over the holidays. This can be challenging for parents to navigate. The costs of these services can vary considerable, and are likely to be the determining factor in decision-making for parents and that this was hard to navigate for parents and that costs of these services varied hugely but would often be the determining factor in decision making for parents.

A number of parents told us that the hours for childcare and overall lack of flexibility did not cater to their needs due to the nature of their work, including irregular working hours and changing shift patterns. Some parents thought that a more flexible option where childcare could be changed week to week or even booked by the hour would be really helpful. Many of the working parents we spoke to who were already using an out of school care solution which met their needs and supported their working pattern noted their appreciation of a flexible approach by their providers.

"The after school service is amazing. I changed my hours at work last year and would not have been able to do so without this service. There is a variety of different activities which is available and is fantastic. Also helps that the staff are all friendly and brilliant at their jobs. My child loves coming here." (parent speaking about after school club)

## Scottish Out of School Care Network Survey

From the summer of 2017 to the summer of 2018 the Scottish Out of School Care Network conducted a survey[10] of parents/carers who were using out of school care in various locations across Scotland. In total, 298 responses were received.

Overall, parents/carers were very positive about their experience of using out of school care:

The top six most positively rated statements were:

92% of parents/carers either strongly agreed or agreed with the following statement: 'SAFE – my children are safe in the service.'

91% of parents/carers either strongly agreed or agreed with the following statement: 'NURTURED – the staff are friendly and supportive.'

91% of parents/carers either strongly agreed or agreed with the following statement: 'I am happy with the quality of the service.'

90% of parents/carers either strongly agreed or agreed with the following statement: 'My children generally enjoy attending the service.'

90% of parents/carers either strongly agreed or agreed with the following statement: 'ACTIVE – my children have access to physical plan and activities both indoors & outdoors.'

61% of parents/carers who provided comments highlighted staff as being the 'most notable thing' in the service.

## Employability

From our engagement, many parents told of us how limited access to childcare is impacting on their ambitions either by preventing their (re-) entry to the labour market or enabling career progression. Many parents highlighted the use of informal childcare (most notably grandparents) to meet their requirements. However, this is not always an option for all families and parents noted that it can also present its own challenges. Even parents with a local support network told us that they often struggled to find regular, reliable childcare and often felt like they were a burden on family members. Parents recognise the value of family and friends in terms of the support provided and enabling children to socialise in a range of settings. However, the first choice for many parents would be to have access to reliable childcare.

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10 "The service is a lifeline", Parents/carers' thoughts on OSC, Scottish Out of School Care Network Survey, January 2019.
https://soscn.org/downloads/reports/SOSCN_the_service_is_a_lifeline_parents_survey_january_2019.pdf

Almost all of the parents we spoke to were women. Childcare issues appeared to disproportionately affect mothers, some of whom reported that they could only look for employment which fitted within school hours so they were available to look after their children. Other parents told us that they have multiple part time jobs in order to manage childcare requirements. For parents who have taken time off to look after their children during their early years, it can be difficult to return to work. One parent told us that these difficulties stem from negative perceptions of parents re-entering the workforce as she put it, "people think you've lost your brain cells". We also learned that parents transitioning into work and exploring childcare for the first time require greater support to understand what provision exists in the community for their child to access, and the financial and practical support that may be available. Reflecting on employment opportunities was an emotive subject and parents clearly articulated their frustration at their situation and lack of options.

Again, it is important to balance this with the very positive reflections we had from working parents who were using out of school care options which supported them to work. Parents clearly articulated the positive benefits for their children and the importance of the provision in enabling them to continue and progress in their careers.

Lower income parents told of us the vicious circle of not being able to access work without childcare, and not being able to put in place childcare without employment due to prohibitive costs. This is likely to exacerbate the gap between lower and higher income parents as it follows that those that have secure access to out of school care would be in a stronger position to stay in employment and advance their career.

> "Now I'm down to part time and it's soul destroying" (parent from Glasgow who had to reduce working hours because she could not access childcare)

## Quality

All of the parents that we spoke to stressed how important it is to them that their children are safe, happy and having fun with their friends. Parents were less interested in qualifications for staff and more interested in staff knowing and understanding their children, being enthusiastic and interested in their play and learning.

In general, parents had very positive experiences of using out of school care or had heard from friends about the positive impact that it can make. However, some parents also shared some more negative feedback around children sometimes being bored, food choices being limited (particularly at breakfast clubs), activities sometimes not being child-led, and a lack of quality resources to facilitate play.

> "I'm capable of earning more than £73 a week, if someone would just give me a chance." (parent from Glasgow)

Parents shared a preference for out of school care to be activity-based, allowing children to pursue their hobbies and get outdoors wherever possible. Opportunity to play outdoors and make use of community resources was identified by parents as important for promoting their children's wellbeing and development. Indeed, amongst non-users of out of school care parents said that opportunities such as these would make them reconsider, as they could see a clear benefit for their child. Parents were clear that they wanted the time their children spent in out of school care to be relaxing and to be clearly different from the time they spent at school.

## Accessibility and Affordability

Parents recognised that, in general, there are a range of childcare providers and activities available in the community for their children to access. This was particularly the case in urban settings, with fewer choices in rural areas. Some parents from more remote areas did provide examples of there being no available provision locally. In these situations, most childcare was led by parents and could not always be relied upon.

"OSC can offer invaluable life experiences" (Parent from Shetland)

"I just want to go to work and know that they're happy" (Parent from Dundee)]

Despite the clear challenges, parents engaged with us creatively to consider a range of possible solutions.

Although there are a far greater range of choices in urban areas, some parents felt that they were unable to access most out of school care, and other activities for their children, due to cost. These parents felt that many options for their children (including those which may be subsidised to some extent) were unaffordable. Parents told us that they take their children back to the same museums, art galleries and parks repeatedly, because they are the only activities that they can access easily and afford. Again, transportation was a key concern.

"parents are isolated, they have nothing" (parent from Argyll and Bute)

For those parents already using out of school care, they spoke very positively about how accessible their chosen provision was, with some noting the ease of picking multiple children up from the same place and many noting that the convenience of picking up from a local school.

## Additional Support Needs (ASNs)

Accessibility concerns, and transportation issues, can be especially significant for parents of children with disabilities and additional support needs. Some parents noted that there was very little out of school care locally which provided appropriate support for their child and in some areas parents noted that waiting lists were very long for specialist provision. Some parents also reported that children attending specialist schools did not have any access to out of school care at their school. However, also within mainstream schools we heard examples of families unable to access after school and holiday clubs because the provider was having difficulty meeting the additional support requirements, including upskilling staff and resourcing additional staff. In these examples, parents reported that they felt they had no option but to put their career on hold due to lack of suitable childcare.

"We could afford the childcare, but there is no childcare….without Granny we would have had to massively cut our working hours." (parent from Dundee)

# Charlotte's story

Charlotte lives in Glasgow and is a single kinship carer for her 11 year old granddaughter.  Charlotte is unemployed and she feels that with the responsibilities of being a kinship carer of a LAAC (looked after and accommodated child), in particular regular social work and numerous other child related appointments, make it impossible to work  *"you can't work as a kinship carer, you just can't."* Charlotte's granddaughter has attended after school and school holiday clubs in the past through a local charity which supports children in kinship care. These activities have been great and have given Charlotte a welcome break whilst also giving her granddaughter lots of opportunities to make friends and go on trips which she loved. Unfortunately, all of these programmes have been short-term, so Charlotte isn't able to rely on them throughout the year. Charlotte finds being a kinship carer very demanding as she's with her granddaughter all the time, apart from when she is at school. She also recognises that this might not be the best experience for her granddaughter as she is becoming more reliant and demanding on Gran's company. Charlotte said *"I feel like she's quite isolated because she's just with me all the time."* Charlotte receives one night of respite every fortnight when her granddaughter goes to stay with a foster care family overnight. Charlotte finds this very helpful but her granddaughter is saying she doesn't want to go anymore and doesn't enjoy her time there. Charlotte is increasingly feeling under pressure and guilty about taking time for herself.

> "maybe if there were more clubs or activities, she [my granddaughter] could go to after school I wouldn't feel the need for foster care respite."

# Maureen's story

Maureen lives in Glasgow with her husband and three sons aged 11, 8 and 6. Maureen's husband works as a security guard, which means he often works irregular shift patterns and childcare largely falls to Maureen. Maureen has a degree qualification and worked in youth work for years, but stopped working to look after her boys when they were young. When her youngest started his last year of nursery, Maureen felt ready to go back to work but couldn't find a way to manage the childcare – *"I was ready to go back to work but there was just no way."* Now, after over ten years of not working Maureen says it is challenging trying to get back into work while managing childcare – *"If you cannae get the childcare you cannae get the job, if you cannae get the job you cannae get the childcare."* Despite these challenges Maureen is looking for volunteering opportunities which she hopes will lead to paid work which would make a huge difference to their family – *"If I got a job it would really help lift us out of poverty."*

The nature of Maureen's husband's work as a security guard has also placed a lot of strain on their family. She said *"a lot of employers don't accommodate for families"* and noted that in some industries, such as security, *"the whole culture needs to change, they're not treating staff well at all…they can't retain because if people aren't valued and respected they'll have sick days or they won't stay on."* Maureen said that her husband has experienced a huge amount of stress due to his working conditions and the hours which are not family friendly. She said there have been long periods where her husband has worked back-shift and isn't able to spend time with his children after school and in the evenings which has caused *"broken connections for the family."*

Maureen and her husband are in receipt of Universal Credit but they have had difficulty in accessing the money they are entitled to. Even when her husband had a period of ill health and spent time in hospital after surgery, they didn't feel able to apply for additional benefits for fear that it wouldn't work properly – *"We're both so stressed out with being on Universal Credit. We were terrified of the benefits system, we were terrified to apply for anything."* The stress caused by difficulties with money, his employment and health has meant that Maureen's husband is experiencing a period of depression and though she wants to find work herself and give him a break she feels that the family would still benefit from access to childcare – *"I just don't know how healthy it is for any child to spend time with a depressed father or mother."*

Maureen feels strongly about the importance of youth work and youth complexes which give children and young people choice and independence. She said that children and young people need a *"safe place to go where they're developing in their learning and they are supported."* What's most important is that children are happy and looked after, these were the most important factors ahead of staff qualifications. The school that Maureen's sons attend does run some after school activities, but these are not always reliable and can be cancelled at the last minute. She also said that it was difficult because activities for different age-groups are held on different nights – *"If one of my kids has an after school club to go to and the others don't it disrupts our routine because I have to pick up twice in the space of an hour."* This also means that these after school activities don't help meet the family's childcare needs as a whole.

> **"If you cannae get the childcare you cannae get the job, if you cannae get the job you cannae get the childcare."**

# Marie's Story

Marie lives in Glasgow and is a single mum to her daughter, who is in primary 5, and her 21 year old son. She works at a community baker, two days a week and her daughter attends an after school club on these days. The after school club costs £18 per day and Marie also pays for breakfast club on her working days which costs £2 a session. Marie pays for the childcare but is able to reclaim 70% of the costs through tax credits. During the school holidays, she pays for full days of childcare, from 8:30am to 5:30pm , at the club. She said that even with the 70% claim, *"it's expensive but there's nothing I can do, I need to use it."*

Marie said she's very happy with the after school club, that her daughter enjoys the activities and especially the trips they get to go on in the summer holidays. Her daughter would like to attend breakfast club every day, so that she has longer to play with her friends, but Marie can't afford this. She can't afford to spend any more money on childcare. Marie also appreciates the fact that the after school club have

been supportive and flexible, giving her extra time to make payments at times when she's struggled to meet the costs.

Marie told us that she used to work in care, a job that she really enjoyed. She said *"I loved that job, and I was good at it, but I couldn't do those hours…I just couldn't."* She couldn't find childcare to fit with the new hours, so she had to leave her job and find other work. This experience, and the experience of finding childcare in general was described as very stressful. Marie commented – *"The lack of childcare, it causes you stress – you can end up with people off sick."* Marie's new employers have been more flexible and have agreed to change her hours to accommodate the school drop-off and pick-up. Marie feels conflicted about how much work she's able to take on; she'd like to work more hours and stop receiving benefits but she doesn't think that she'd be able to afford to work more, because of the cost of childcare – *"If they [my employer] gave me more hours I don't think I could take it, I couldn't afford it. I'd like to come off benefits but no."*

# Lindsay's story

Lindsay is a single mum to Sophie who is 8 years old. Lindsay works in a supermarket, shift work, 16 hours/week which she has had to negotiate to fit around school hours and weekends when her mum can look after Sophie. She would love to be able to work more hours but the cost of childcare means that it's not possible.

Sophie attends breakfast club at the school each day which costs £1/day. The after school club would cost £400/month if she used it every day. There are also difficulties with signing up to full terms and set days and the upfront deposit required.

Lindsay makes use of other more affordable options for activities for Sophie after school including athletics and dancing which are provided by Active Schools and cost around £40/term. She noted that even this is difficult to afford, particularly as you have to pay up front and altogether at the start of each term. She also uses a local drama group which costs 50p/week for an hour and a half of drama.

Lindsay told us that she struggles during school holidays. Sophie enjoys sports, especially football but there is a lack of affordable provision and particularly where Sophie's autism could be well supported. She noted that she works for nothing in the summer and finds it stressful juggling work and family time and having to rely on her mum to provide some of the childcare - *"it costs me more in childcare over the summer than I earn"*

Lindsay had previously not worked but was keen to provide a stable home environment for Sophie and to set a good example. She did say that it was really difficult to maintain her job given the stresses of arranging childcare. Lindsay was positive about the benefits of out of school care for children, particularly those clubs providing activities as a priority. She

said it would be a *"huge help if childcare was more available and subsidised in some way, I don't want it for free"*. She said that it would make sense if **"people paid what they could afford"** noting that she thought people wanted to work, it was just too difficult - *"it sometimes feels like you get no thanks for working"*.

Lindsay also noted issues with the benefits system, particularly with reclaiming the costs of childcare and that she'd been let down before and ended up in financial difficulty so it *"just wasn't worth the stress anymore. I just pay what I can afford from my wages"*.

## Reflections

We know that out of school care is mostly used by families where one or both parents are working, with secure and higher incomes. However, all of the parents that we engaged with seemed to experience some insecurity relating to childcare. Some parents were able to manage this by paying additional costs (for example to keep a child's place even when it was not required), while others were in a position that they had family members that they could rely upon. Most of the parents we spoke to felt that their own experience of using out of school care could be improved. A number of discussions focussed on comparisons with out of school care elsewhere in Scotland, showing that parents anecdotally have a picture of what was available elsewhere.

Parents and carers who were struggling most with accessing childcare tended to be on lower incomes and were restricted in their childcare options by affordability. Rurality was highlighted as an issue in relation to childcare choices and was often exacerbated by challenges with local transport. We also heard of particular challenges in accessing out of school care from parents of children with a disability or additional support need. Even within cities, where there is greater choice in out of school care provision, parents told us that they struggled to find suitable, age appropriate childcare and activities. This picture tended to be exacerbated in more rural locations.

The outcomes for families resulting from a lack of access to childcare were the same regardless of income level or circumstance – lack of certainty, making it difficult to plan for the future, and a real impact on employment prospects. This was felt by parents at a range of educational levels, and parents often expressed negative implications for themselves, their children and their family relationships.

**Q8**: How can we make sure out of school care is an affordable option for more families? (e.g. subsidised provision, remove barriers in accessing benefits, help with upfront costs)

**Q9**: How can services be more effectively delivered in rural/remote areas to meet the needs of families?

**Q10**: How can we ensure that children with disabilities and additional support needs can access out of school care services?

**Q11**: What flexibility do parents and carers need from out of school care services? Can you tell us why this flexibility is important?

**Q12**: What is important for parents and carers in terms of location of out of school care services? Should they be delivered in schools, community facilities, outdoors?

**Q13**: What ages of children do parents/carers need provision for?

**Q14**: Do parents/carers need food provision as part of after-school and holiday clubs?

# OUT OF SCHOOL CARE SECTOR

**It is really important that we listen to the views of the out of school care sector in shaping the developing out of school care policy. So far this has included engaging directly with those working in registered out of school care services and with childminders. We have also visited a range of activity based services although the views of those working in these services haven't been gathered more formally to date.**



## How We Heard



Between November 2018 and March 2019 we delivered a series of regional events in collaboration with the Scottish Out of School Care Network (SOSCN). SOSCN are a charity and membership organisation, funded by the Scottish Government, who support the rights of children to access quality play, care and learning opportunities before and after school, and during school holidays. They provide information, resources, guidance, training and a quality improvement framework, Achieving Quality Scotland.

These workshops were designed to give staff working in the out of school care sector the opportunity to share their views on the current picture in Scotland and to consider what changes or improvements they would like to see for their sector in the future. The events took place in Aberdeen, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dundee and Inverness. 250 practitioners attended from 162 services and while there were some issues and ideas that were particular to local areas, there was much consensus about the ambitions, the barriers and the changes required to benefit the out of school care sector in Scotland.

## What We Heard

### Improving children's outcomes

Out of school care practitioners were proud to share the strengths of their services and their important role of caring for and supporting children. One practitioner summed up an out of school care service as "A fun and flexible place where all children are valued and included" – this reflects the view of the sector well, with its child-centred approach and focus on fun.

Services were described as nurturing, safe, and welcoming environments that:

- provide a range of tailored activities and experiences for children
- give children opportunities to socialise and form friendships
- are distinct and separate from the formal learning environment of school
- provide free time for children to have fun, to be themselves
- value children's thoughts and ideas and respect children as individuals
- are inclusive – for all children, including older children

## Workforce qualities and qualifications

Practitioners reflected that:

- a dedicated, caring, loyal, passionate and resourceful workforce exists.
- generally qualification requirements are viewed positively
- it is beneficial to have access to specific training for school age childcare
- training should be accessible and affordable
- a mix of skills and qualifications is important for providing diversity and richness of experience
- more flexibility with the range of acceptable qualifications would be welcome

## Recruitment and retention

Practitioners commented on:

- challenges of recruiting and retaining out of school care staff
- importance of quality staff – people who can relate to children and connect with them
- barriers to attracting staff due to part time nature of work
- pay and conditions being often poor and not reflective of qualifications and professionalism
- better promotion of careers in out of school care required
- a national pay scale could be helpful

## Regulation and wider support

Practitioners noted:

- challenges relating to Care Inspectorate registration and inspection requirements
- requirement for more tailored policies and guidance
- greater flexibility around staff ratios would be helpful
- the un-level playing field which exists between registered childcare and activity based services which are often providing options for the same children in the same communities
- more support from some local authorities would be welcomed
- a fair and consistent approach to policies such as free school lets was needed

## Accessibility & Affordability

Many of those working in out of school care were keen to make services more widely available to families who are not currently accessing them, including:

- parents and carers who may be out of work, looking for work, training or studying
- families who are experiencing poverty, especially one parent/carer families

- families where a child has a disability or additional support need
- families where there is a need for respite (for either the child or the parent/carer),

They also noted:

- the importance of community and links to supporting the local economy, by enabling parents and carers to work.
- the importance of flexibility and the need for services to be responsive to local needs in order to best support the families and communities they work with.

## Food Insecurity

Practitioners noted:

- a clear need to join up out of school care services and holiday food provision as part of the food poverty agenda
- existing out of school care clubs may be less stigmatising for children than services established specifically to address holiday hunger
- high quality care and a wide range of activities alongside food provision is important
- the importance of providing food choices and opportunities to be involved in food preparation with quality ingredients

### Joined-up working

Practitioners highlighted:

- benefits of local networks where they exist
- importance of collaborative working, especially with schools and senior leadership teams
- a desire for improved communication and partnerships with schools and local communities
- some challenges with information sharing when working alongside other professionals involved in supporting children.
- out of school care should be viewed as a community resource with links across the community

### Spaces and Facilities

Practitioners across Scotland noted the challenge of finding high quality, dedicated and reliable spaces for out of school care services. Staff said:

- ideally they'd like to work in settings which are purpose designed with space for different activities and functions
- ample storage and access to a kitchen and outdoor space is required
- they're often frustrated by the lack of protected space for services, particularly in schools

- out of school care should be considered at the design stage of all new-build schools
- their service is often seen as a low priority and they can often be moved out of the space at short notice
- environment is so important for delivering high quality play experiences
- they would like to make best use of outdoor and community spaces

### Resources and funding

Practitioners noted:

- the challenging nature of running out of school care services with limited budgets and resources
- a need for funding support to help with provision for children with additional support needs
- funding for transport costs which are prohibitive for many settings, particularly in rural areas
- a desire to share more resources with schools and noted issues with rising costs of lets, particularly in some areas.
- the range of costs of services for parents
- the sector could benefit from support in helping businesses, especially third sector and charitable organisations to run sustainably.

# CHILDMINDERS

## How We Heard

In June 2019, we conducted a small-scale online survey to collect information from childminders about the out of school care services they provide. The survey was circulated to members of the Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA) and 147 childminders currently providing childcare to school-aged children completed the survey. All responses were submitted anonymously. In addition to the online survey we also visited some childminders in their homes and community spaces to learn about their experience of childminding in Scotland.

## What We Heard

Some key findings from the survey include:

- Over three-quarters (78.1%) of respondents reported providing OSC to five school-age children or fewer, and just over two-fifths (43.9%) of respondents reported providing OSC to three school-age children or fewer.
- Nearly all (95.9%) of respondents reported providing OSC to children from two parent households, compared to just under two-fifths (38.1%) who reported providing OSC to children from single parent households.

- Just over four-fifths (81.6%) of respondents reported providing OSC to children from households where both parents were in full-time employment. Just over one-third (34.7%) reported providing OSC to children from households where one parent is in full-time employment. Very few (1.4%) reported providing OSC to children from households where both parents are not in employment or study.
- Childminders told us that the focus of our new framework should be on:
  - Flexibility of childcare (most popular option)
  - Accessibility for all children and parents (2nd)
  - Affordability for parents (joint 3rd)
  - Quality of activities (joint 3rd)
- 90% of childminders told us that community spaces are either 'important' or 'very important' to their out of school care provision.
- 99% of childminders told us that outdoor spaces were either 'important' or 'very important' to their out of school care provision.
- 87% of childminders offer some kind of food provision as part of their service.

In our discussions, childminders were overwhelmingly positive in describing their work, referencing the close connection that they develop with families which can enable greater flexibility in the service that they provide, and their joy of caring for children.

It is important to note that the findings of this survey are not representative of the views or practices of all childminders in Scotland. However, the results do offer insight into areas that may be explored further as part of the development of our future policy.

Childminders described their service as providing:

- care in small groups which can be especially important for some children
- a home from home environment
- tailored activities which are planned by the children
- a relaxing environment before and after school
- strong bonds and family ties due to the individual nature of childminding
- services for all children and families

They spoke about:

- the importance of accessing the latest training and progressing in their own professional development.
- being content with the quality of training on offer
- the importance of transferring learning to their professional practice
- the challenges of accessing training – a wider range of training options was requested
- face-to-face opportunities to network with childminders and other childcare professionals are valuable
- challenges of finding time for training given the sole responsibility for children and long working hours
- feeling valued as part of the childcare sector and the need to maintain this positive reputation

Childminders felt that they provide:

- an affordable, accessible service for parents and carers
- flexibility for parents and carers including early drop off times and late pick ups

- a responsive service often changing plans to suit parents needs
- continuity of service for children and families
- options in rural communities which might not sustain a larger service

Childminders told us they:

- make use of resources within the community to provide a wide range of activities for children
- can use local resources based on children's requests –swimming pool, library etc.
- find it easy to make best use of local outdoor spaces – parks, beaches, woods etc.
- often form networks with other local childminders to create new opportunities for play and learning
- have good communication with local communities including schools
- benefit from local authority support where it's provided particularly in accessing training

# Zoe Thwaites, Avoch, Scottish Highlands

I have been childminding for four years and provide care for children of all ages including out of school care for those of primary school age. As a childminder, I believe I can play a crucial role in providing care for children out of school hours. Children are able to relax after the pressures of the school day, while continuing their social development through interaction with other children in a home based environment. There are opportunities to extend learning through free play and creative activities as well as through outdoor sports all within the local community and surrounding areas.

Mila's mum says *"Mila (11) has benefited hugely from being looked after by Zoe. Through Zoe she has experienced new things and undertaken dozens of projects. A shy and anxious child when she first attended Zoe's, she was instantly comfortable in Zoe's care due to the careful, warm and welcoming atmosphere created in the house. Over the years I have seen her confidence flourish"*.

Emily's mum says *"My daughter Emily (8) has been provided with the comforts of a home based environment at the end of the school day, where she has been able to relax with friends through a multitude of outdoor opportunities and creative activities. Emily spends time with younger children, some of pre-school age, with whom she can take on a caring and mentoring role within boundaries set by Zoe to the benefit of all"*.

## Reflections

There are still many challenges facing the out of school care sector and there was a desire for these to be recognised and acted upon in order to improve what is understood to be a vital service for children and families. We engaged with a dedicated and professional workforce who understand the importance of their services to the children and to the parents and carers who use them. The workforce however, feel strongly that their sector suffers from a lack of recognition and understanding, although this was less of a focus for the childminders we spoke to. Staff working in out of school care provision said that they felt there was little knowledge or appreciation of the skills, qualifications and experience they have – even from parents who use out of school care services and other professionals who they engage with regularly.

Most staff we talked to share a vision for out of school care in Scotland that is accessible and inclusive for all children. It was widely recognised that services could support many more children and families if provision was more affordable and accessible to those on low incomes, and that it could have a much bigger role in supporting those who experience food insecurity and poverty. Many practitioners advocated for financial support, subsidies or funded places for families who need them. Staff also stressed that there is a need for more funding to support children with disabilities and additional support needs. They noted the importance of specialist equipment, staff training and ratios.

The sector highlighted a disparity between the registered childcare sector and activity based services whose primary function may not be childcare but for many families may be providing a childcare service. These services may be providing high quality provision but aren't subject to the same requirements in relation to staffing qualifications or ratios of staff to children.

Both childminders and out of school care staff were passionate about the high quality service they're already providing to families and that it was important not to lose sight of this when considering changes to the sector. They noted the positive outcomes for children who are accessing their services and that this would always be their main focus.

**Q15**: What qualifications, skills and experience should the out of school care workforce have? What is most important and why?

**Q16**: Thinking about the full range of provision -  regulated out of school care, childminders, holiday programmes and other activities - should qualification requirements for staff working across these provisions be the same or different? Why?

**Q17**: How can we promote working in the out of school care sector as a more attractive career choice?

**Q18**: How can we increase diversity across the out of school care workforce?

# 6. Summary and Next Steps

## Summary

This draft framework highlights the huge amount of work already going on across Scotland to deliver high quality out of school care services for many children and families. It also sets out a bold vision for the future of out of school care and considers the changes which might be required to deliver that vision.

The framework identifies 3 key aims for focussing future policy development;

1. **High quality services which provide children with life-enhancing experiences.**

2. **Out of school care is accessible and affordable and meets the needs of children and young people, parents and carers and communities.**

3. **Out of school care services are embedded in communities and enable children and young people to access a range of spaces including the outdoors.**

## We Heard

The framework also presents a substantial amount of information resulting from a wide range of engagement with children, with parents and with the out of school care sector. We hope that this information assists in provoking discussion and sparking conversation about what the priorities should be for our developing out of school care policy.

Most importantly, our framework has told the stories of the many people who have contributed to developing our vision and to helping us better understand the challenges and barriers which currently exist to delivering this vision. This has been an invaluable part of our engagement and policy development process and we will continue to do this as part of our consultation.

## Next Steps

Our draft framework asks a number of questions. The responses to these questions will help us to shape our strategic framework, to consider the priorities for the future and to understand what more can be done to further support the out of school care sector to continue to deliver high quality sustainable services within communities and to address the challenges for some parents of accessing out of school care and for some children of accessing a range of out of school and holiday activities.

Over the coming months we will invite parents and carers and children and young people to form a public panel which will create a reference point, providing a voice for those groups throughout our ongoing policy development. We will also continue our engagement with the out of school care sector through a series of consultation events. This will ensure that this process continues to be a truly collaborative one, focussed on changes which will better meet the needs of children and families across Scotland.

## Access to Childcare Fund

In order to deliver our suggested vision, changes will be required within the current system. In order to test models which can deliver this change we have created a £3 million fund for supporting childcare provision and activities which are based in local communities and which will directly reduce the cost of living for low income families (by providing subsidised or low cost childcare for school aged children). This will be coupled with support for parents or careers to enter employment or training or to increase current hours of work. The fund will be delivered over a two year period starting in April 2020.

Each project funded should be able to demonstrate direct positive impacts for at least one of the 6 priority groups identified in the Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan and also demonstrate positive outcomes for children. We will maximise opportunities to align this fund with the £12 million Parental Employment Support Fund (PESF) and the £6 million investment in employability support for disabled parents.

The fund will:

- test the change required to remove the barriers of school aged childcare costs for low income families as a driver for reducing child poverty

- test the change required to deliver our vision for after school and holiday childcare

- provide solutions to enabling opportunities for all children to enjoy a full range of play experiences outside of school

- consider appropriate models of delivery which can support this change

- provide robust evidence of the social impact and positive outcomes for children and families which access to affordable, accessible and flexible out of school care and activity programmes can deliver.

Details of the criteria for applications to the Access to Childcare Fund will be available over the coming weeks.

## Thank You

We would like to offer a huge thanks to everyone who contributed to this draft framework, particularly to all the parents and children who gave up their time and allowed us to tell their stories and share their aspirations for out of school care. We'd also like to thank all those working in the out of school care sector, who spoke so passionately about the job that they do and thought carefully about how we might best improve what's provided for children and families. And finally a big thanks to our reference group who started us on this journey, helping us to create a collaborative and bold vision for out of school care in Scotland and working with us along the way to consider what might be possible. We look forward to continuing the work to deliver that vision.

## Consultation

Consultation is open on this draft framework and will remain open until 6 December 2019 – please take the time to provide us with your thoughts and views on the future of out of school care in Scotland. We will be supplementing our formal consultation with further engagement events, in advance of publishing a final framework for out of school care in Scotland before the end of this Parliament.

# Annex A
# Summary of Questions

# FUTURE POLICY ON OUT OF SCHOOL CARE

## What we want to find out:

What can the Scottish Government do to ensure that out of school care better meets the needs of children and families in Scotland?

### How can national policy support and enhance out of school care?

• What name should we use for the range of out of school services and activities? Is there a better term than 'Out of School Care'? (Q3)

• Do you agree with our 3 key aims for a future out of school care framework? (Q4)

### What sort of out of school activities do families want/need?

• What range of services are needed: regulated out of school care, childminders, activity-based clubs and programmes such as sports clubs, creative arts clubs, outdoor activities, other types of activities?
Can you tell us why these services are important? (Q1)

• What ages of children do parents/carers need provision for? (Q13)

• What flexibility do parents and carers need from out of school care services? Can you tell us why this flexibility is important? (Q11)

• What is important for parents and carers in terms of location of out of school care services? Should they be delivered in school, community facilities, outdoors? (Q12)

• Do parents/carers need food provision as part of after-school and holiday clubs? (Q14)

• What do children and young people want from out of school care services and does this differ depending on age? (Q6)

• What different activities or provision might secondary school aged children want? (Q7)

### How can we make out of school care accessible to all families and children?

• How can we make sure out of school care is an affordable option for more families? (e.g. subsidised provision, remove barriers in accessing benefits, help with the upfront costs) (Q8)

• How can we help to ensure that all families have access to an out of school care place for their child/ren if they want it? (Q5)

• How can services be more effectively delivered in rural/remote areas to meet the needs of families? (Q9)

• How can we ensure that children with disabilities and additional support needs can access out of school care services? (Q10)

• What can we do to support community based approaches to delivering out of school care? (Q2)

### How can we support the out of school care workforce to deliver high quality services?

• What qualifications, skills and experience should the out of school care workforce have? What is most important and why? (Q15)

• Thinking about the full range of provision - regulated out of school care, childminders, holiday programmes and other activities - should qualification requirements for staff working across these provisions be the same or different? Why? (Q16)

• How can we promote working in the out of school sector as a more attractive career choice? (Q17)

• How can we increase diversity across the out of school care workforce? (Q18)

**Annex B
Discussion paper
What do we know about Out of School Care
in Scotland?**

## Key points

- The literature underlines links between access to out of school care (OSC) and child poverty. Access to affordable and accessible OSC has been highlighted as a potential barrier to taking up or staying in good quality employment, or increasing hours. Childcare costs may put pressure on family budgets, and families may find accessing the available financial support difficult.

- For low income families school holidays can increase financial pressure and may lead to food insecurity and missing out on opportunities that are available to children in higher income families. Childcare costs during school holidays may also put pressure on family budgets or make sustaining work difficult.

- There is a range of childcare available out of school hours from registered OSC providers such as breakfast, after-school and holiday clubs, registered childminders, to clubs providing supervised activities.

- Grandparents are the most common providers of OSC, although a significant minority of families use formal OSC. The majority of children also participate in some form of out of school activity.

- Use of OSC is strongly linked to parental employment, and the most common reason parents give for using OSC is that it allows them to work. Conversely, the most common reasons given for participation in out of school activities relate to the child's enjoyment or development.

- In general, higher income families are more likely to use childcare and formal OSC, than families in the lowest income group.

- The majority of families who use OSC are positive about their arrangements; however, affordability and lack of choice are issues for some.

- Overall, there is a lack of robust evidence on the role and impacts of out of school care/activities.

- The available evidence suggests that the main potential impact of OSC on parents and the broader family is through positive labour market outcomes. There is evidence that using OSC allows some parents, especially single parents and those not in work, to remain in or secure employment, increase working hours or undertake further education or training.

- The limited evidence available also suggests that high quality OSC may benefit children by promoting positive social interactions and relationships, building social skills and confidence, and providing the opportunity for play in a safe environment, particularly for younger children and those from the most socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds.

- There is also some evidence showing that out of school activities/programmes can have small positive impacts on a range of children's outcomes, and pointing to a potential role for these activities in reducing the attainment gap.

- It is important to note that as children from families with low socio-economic status are less likely to access OSC than those from higher status backgrounds; as a consequence, they are less likely to benefit from the developmental advantages associated with participation in OSC.

# 1. Background and policy context

## 1.1 Purpose of this discussion paper

This paper provides an overview of what we know about 'out of school care' (OSC) in Scotland. It has been developed alongside the draft framework on OSC, and is intended to inform discussions about the development of policy on OSC. The paper draws on a range of evidence relevant to OSC in Scotland, including some existing reviews of relevant literature, and research and analysis commissioned to fill evidence gaps identified. It is not, however, based on a comprehensive or systematic literature review. Instead, this paper should be viewed as work in progress that will be further developed alongside the framework. The paper begins by describing the policy context in Scotland and considering literature on the role of OSC in tackling child poverty. Then it outlines what we know about current provision and use of OSC in Scotland, and describes findings from research on parents' views of the affordability and availability of OSC. Finally it considers what the evidence tells us about the impact of OSC on child and parent outcomes.

## 1.2. What is out of school care?

There is no single formal definition of out of school care (OSC) in the UK. However, there is a general consensus that OSC is: "care provided to school-aged children outside of usual school hours and that this care includes child-minding, after-school clubs, holiday clubs and breakfast clubs".[1]

## 1.3 Policy context

Scottish Government's OSC policy dates back to 2003 when *School's Out* was published.[2] This has provided the underpinning policy framework and guidance for OSC for the last 15 years. Policies relating to early learning and childcare (ELC) and school education have changed hugely since then as has the wider policy context, particularly in relation to child poverty and inequality.

From August 2020, the provision of funded ELC will expand from 600 hours to 1,140 hours. The expansion of the funded ELC entitlement will provide parents with 30 hours per week (if taken during term-time) of free at the point of access ELC for all 3 and 4 year olds (and 2 year olds who meet certain eligibility criteria). This policy is focussed on ensuring a universal best start for all children and reducing the poverty related attainment gap, however, it will also enable parents to consider their own situation and may be a factor in enabling them to access or increase education or employment. The vision for ELC is underpinned by the principles of quality, flexibility, accessibility and affordability.[3]

Within school age education, Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence encompasses all the experiences that are planned for learners wherever they are being educated. It takes account of all the experiences that learners can have through learning out with school and in activity that would previously have been thought of as extra-curricular. The curriculum aims to ensure that all children and young people in Scotland develop the knowledge, skills and attributes they will need if they are to flourish in life, learning and work, now and in the future, and to appreciate their place in the world. Additionally, the Scottish Attainment Challenge is a targeted initiative to tackle the poverty-related attainment gap.

1   Siraj I and Kingston D., 2015, An independent review of the Scottish early learning and childcare (ELC) workforce and out of school care (OSC) workforce. UCL Institute of Education, University College London: www.gov.scot/Resource/0047/00477419.pdf.

2   Scottish Executive, 2003, School's out: framework for the development of out-of-school care: https://www2.gov.scot/resource/doc/47032/0023963.pdf

3   Scottish Government, 2016, A blueprint for 2020: the expansion of early learning and childcare in Scotland: https://www.gov.scot/publications/blueprint-2020-expansion-early-learning-childcare-scotland-consultation/

In November 2018, the Poverty and Inequality Commission provided advice to the Scottish Government on addressing poverty during school holidays.[4] They underline that families face a range of additional costs and pressures during the school holidays. The Commission recommended that Scottish Government, COSLA and local authorities work together to take a strategic approach to developing and funding a coordinated package of school holiday support.

The 2017-18 Programme for Government committed to publishing a framework for after-school and holiday childcare within this parliamentary term.[5] The 2018-19 Programme for Government provided more detail, noting that Scottish Government will publish a consultation asking for views on that draft framework in the next year.[6] In developing the framework, it is important to understand what is currently available and what barriers prevent access to OSC, in order to set out what more needs to be done to ensure that OSC is available for all children.

## 1.4 Legislative requirement

In Scotland there is no statutory duty on local authorities or any other body to provide out of school and holiday childcare. The 1995 Children (Scotland) Act placed a statutory duty on local authorities to provide daycare for school-age children 'in need' before and after school, and during holidays. The 2014 Children and Young People (Scotland) Act placed an additional statutory duty on local authorities to consult with parents on their OSC needs. Parental involvement and engagement is an important priority for national government, local authorities and schools.

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4   https://povertyinequality.scot/publication/poverty-and-inequality-commission-advice-on-poverty-in-school-holidays/

5   Scottish Government, 2017, A nation with ambition: the Government's Programme for Scotland 2017-2018, Scottish Government: Edinburgh. https://www.gov.scot/publications/nation-ambition-governments-programme-scotland-2017-18/

6   Scottish Government, 2018, Delivering for today, investing for tomorrow: the Government's programme for Scotland 2018-2019, Scottish Government: Edinburgh. https://www.gov.scot/publications/delivering-today-investing-tomorrow-governments-programme-scotland-2018-19/

## 2. The role of out of school care in tackling child poverty

### 2.1. Out of school care is important in supporting employment

The Scottish Government's child poverty delivery plan highlights the importance of OSC in enabling many parents, particularly lone parents to enter work or being able to increase their hours to a sufficient level to make work pay.[7] Childcare can be a significant cost for households with children, and a lack of affordable and flexible childcare can limit opportunities for paid employment. Not being able to access flexible childcare may mean parents have to choose low quality part-time jobs, take a role they are overqualified for or leave work altogether.[8]

Research in this area has tended to focus on costs for ELC for pre-school-aged children. A report by the Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) in Scotland highlighted that other costs arising from children's attendance at school – including the cost of school uniforms, transport costs, and

school trips, events and clubs – place pressure on family budgets and can lead to unequal access to opportunities or stigma.[9] Coram Family and Childcare report that in 2018-19, the average cost of an after-school club for a week in Scotland was £54, while the average price of a childminder to 6pm for a week was £68.[10] They also suggest that there is a lack of childcare available for school-age children after school.[11] The weekly price of holiday childcare is £123 per child in Scotland.[12]

Financial support is available to low and middle income families to help pay for child care through the UK Government "tax-free childcare" scheme, Universal Credit, or the Working Tax Credit childcare element (which is being replaced by Universal Credit). However, conditionality on working hours, having to pay upfront costs and difficulties with accessing such support make this difficult for some families. Moreover, for some families the cost of childcare will exceed the support that is available. Additionally, as clubs providing a specific activity are not officially counted as childcare, parents will not be able to

pay for them using tax-free childcare or childcare support through the benefit system. Coram Family and Childcare also note that these type of clubs do not usually offer enough hours of care per week to provide reliable childcare for working parents.[13]

Save the Children held a series of 'childcare conversations' with over 100 parents (of pre-school and school-aged children) across Scotland.[14] They report that parents faced challenges finding suitable childcare. The report notes that the families they engaged with were facing very similar barriers to accessing childcare, with the key barriers being inflexible provision and high costs, particularly for low income families. A particular concern for parents with school-aged children was the cost of after-school and holiday care, which often involved trips and other extra-curricular activities that added to the cost. A lack of suitable childcare meant that parents had to rely more than they would like to on informal support in the form of family and friends. Save the Children also found that parents wanted similar things from childcare provision, namely high

7   Scottish Government, 2018, Every child, every chance: tackling child poverty delivery plan 2018-2022, Scottish Government: Edinburgh. https://www.gov.scot/publications/child-chance-tackling-child-poverty-delivery-plan-2018-22/

8   Butler A. and Rutter J., 2016, Creating an anti-poverty childcare system. Joseph Rowntree Foundation: https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/creating-anti-poverty-childcare-system

9   Child Poverty Action Group in Scotland, 2015, The cost of the school day: https://cpag.org.uk/sites/default/files/CPAG-Scot-Cost-Of-School-Day-Report(Oct15)_0.pdf

10  Coleman L. and Cottell J., 2019, Childcare Survey 2019, Coram Family and Childcare: https://www.familyandchildcaretrust.org/sites/default/files/Resource%20Library/Childcare%20Survey%202019_Coram%20Family%20and%20Childcare.pdf

11  Although the proportion reporting sufficient childcare for older children was low because local authorities reported that they did not hold this data or could not tell (45% for 5-11 year olds and 74% for 12-14 year olds).

12  Ibid.

13  Ibid

14  Save the Children, 2018, Give us a hand with childcare: 10 key messages from parents in Scotland: https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/node/13673/pdf/give_us_a_hand.pdf

quality care that benefits their children's growth and development, and is easily affordable and accessible.

## 2.2 Families living in poverty face additional challenges during school holidays

School holidays make up around 13 weeks of the year, so children and young people spend a quarter of their year not in school. A number of important supports for families are not provided during school holidays e.g. free school meals, breakfast clubs, after-school clubs and activities. The Poverty and Inequality Commission underline that families face a range of additional costs and pressures during the school holidays including: the cost and availability of holiday childcare; financial pressures such as additional costs for food, fuel and activities/transport; providing play opportunities and activities on a low income; parenting challenges and social isolation for both parents and children with existing supports and activities stopping.[15]

Some research suggests that for low income families, school holidays can increase financial pressure and lead to food insecurity, poor health and missing out on opportunities that are available to children in higher income families.

There is research on "summer learning loss" which shows that during the school holidays, children's learning is at risk of stagnating, or even regressing, and that this may be more pronounced in children from low income families. However there is a lack of evidence in the UK context – the majority of research on summer learning loss is from North America where holidays are longer.

Literature exploring childcare during the school holidays is limited. Stewart et al, in a review of the literature, suggest that the high cost of childcare can mean that during the school holiday period many families are financially no – or little – better off in work.[16] They note that sustaining work during school holidays can be particularly challenging for lone parent families. Stewart et al also note that holiday support for children with Additional Support Needs and disabilities is particularly poor, with local authorities reporting little to no provision for such families. Further, that for some parents the difficulties in managing childcare costs and scheduling result in them taking unpaid leave, choosing zero-hour contracts or self-employment.

CPAG in Scotland's research on the cost of school holidays and childcare in Glasgow found that 86% of parents agreed that holiday childcare is too expensive and a further 57% reported that childcare did not suit their working schedule.[17] The Poverty and Inequality Commission note that it is difficult to identify whether there is sufficient holiday childcare available.[18]

## 2.3. Some families experience food insecurity during the school holidays

Families' experience of food insecurity during the school holidays is increasingly the focus of policy discussions but the evidence base on the topic is limited.[19] Discussions tend to be based on anecdotal evidence and the rise in food bank use over the summer.

The Scottish Government committed to monitoring household food insecurity in 2016, following recommendations from an Independent Working Group on Food Poverty. The most recent data from the Scottish Health Survey showed that, in 2017, 8% of adults in Scotland experienced food insecurity, defined as worrying about running out of food due to said that, at some point in the lack of money or other resources[20].

15    Poverty and Inequality Commission, 2018, Advice for the Scottish Government on addressing poverty during school holidays: https://povertyinequality.scot/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Poverty-and-Inequality-Commission-advice-on-poverty-in-school-holidays.pdf

16    Stewart et al., 2018, 'The cost of school holidays for children from low income families'

17    CPAG in Scotland, 2015, The cost of the school holidays: https://cpag.org.uk/sites/default/files/CPAG-Scot-Cost-School-Holidays-full%20report.pdf

18    Poverty and Inequality Commission, 2018, Advice for the Scottish Government

19    Campbell, M., Watson, N. and Watters, N., 2015, The cost of school holidays, What Works Scotland: http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/The-cost-of-school-holidays.pdf

20    Bardsey, D., Dean, L. Dougall, I et al., 2018, Scottish health survey 2017 – main report, Scottish Government: https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-health-survey-2017-volume-1-main-report/

Worrying about running out of food was more prevalent amongst adults with lower household incomes, adults living in more deprived areas and adults with limiting longstanding illness.[21]

In 2019, the UK All Party Parliamentary Group on Hunger estimated that up to three million children in the UK risk being hungry in the school holidays. This group comprises over a million children in poverty who receive free school meals during term time, and two million children who do not receive free school meals because their parents work.[22]

The number of food parcels distributed by food banks in Scotland has increased substantially over the last 5 years. Between 1st April 2018 and 31st March 2019, 210,605 three-day emergency food parcels were given to people in crisis in Scotland by food banks part of the Trussell Trust network – more than double the number of parcels distributed in 2013-14 (71,428).[23] In addition, recent analysis by Independent Food Aid Network and A Menu for Change reported that 221,977 three-day food parcels were distributed between April 2017 and September 2018 by 84 (out of 94) of the independent food banks identified in Scotland. The Trussell Trust report that use of their food banks increases during the summer holidays.

A UK-wide survey of parents with children aged 5-16 years, conducted by Kellogg's in 2015, found that 60% parents with household incomes of less than £25,000 reported that they were not always able to afford to buy food outside school term time, and that a third of parents had skipped a meal so that their children could eat during the school holidays.[24] A survey conducted by CPAG in Scotland in 2015 found that 28% of parents had skipped meals to feed their children and 7% had used food banks to feed their children during school holidays.[25]

21  Ibid

22  Forsay, A., 2017, Hungry Holidays: A report on hunger amongst children during school holidays, All-Party Parliamentary Group on Huner. https://feedingbritain.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/hungry-holidays-1.pdf

23  Trussell Trust, 2019, End of year stats: https://www.trusselltrust.org/news-and-blog/latest-stats/end-year-stats/

24  Kelloggs, 2015, Isolation and Hunger: the reality of the school holidays for struggling families: https://www.kelloggs.co.uk/content/dam/europe/kelloggs_gb/pdf/HOLIDAY+HUNGER+REPORT.pdf. Data are from an online survey by YouGov of parents carried out on behalf of Kellogg's with 580 parents with a household income of £25,000 or less, with children aged 5-16.

25  CPAG in Scotland, 2015, The cost of the school holidays.

A range of potential negative impacts of food insecurity in the school holidays for children and their parents have been suggested in the literature. These are often combined with wider issues relating to the cost of the school holidays, including the high cost of and lack of suitable childcare available. There is some research suggesting that children eat less healthily and do less physical activity over the holidays, which is linked to wider negative health impacts.[26] Research has also found that some children may experience social isolation and loneliness over the holidays: a lack of money for food is often accompanied by a lack of money for taking part in activities, and not having food in the house can be a barrier to inviting friends over to play.[27] Some research suggests that circumstances experienced during the school holidays, including poor nutrition, social isolation and emotional and financial stress within the family can negatively impact on children's school readiness, cognitive functioning, well-being and social integration.[28]

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26  Defeyter, M.A., Graham, P.L., Prince, K., 2015, 'A Qualitative evaluation of holiday breakfast clubs in the UK: views of adult attendees, children and staff'. Front. Public Health 3:199. doi: 10.3389/fpubh.2015.00199; Forsay, A., 2017, Hungry Holidays; Graham, P.L. et al, 2016, School Holiday Food Provision in the UK: A Qualitative Investigation of Needs, Benefits and Potential for Development; Long, M.A., Stretesky, P.B., Graham, P.L. et al., 2018, 'The impact of holiday clubs on household food insecurity: a pilot study'. Health Soc Care Community;26:e261–e269. https://doi.org/10.1111/ hsc.12507

27  Defeyter, M.A. et al., 2015, 'A Qualitative evaluation of holiday breakfast clubs in the UK'; Forsay, A., 2017, 'Hungry Holidays'; McConnon, L., Morgan, K., Van Godwin, J. et al., 2017, Food and Fun School Holiday Enrichment Programme 2016: Evaluation Report, Welsh Local Government Association: http://orca.cf.ac.uk/97619/1/Food%20and%20Fun%20School%20Holiday%20Enrichment%20Programme%20 2016%20Evaluation%20Report%20%28Final%29.pdf

28  Forsay, A., 2017, Hungry Holidays; Graham, P.L. et al, 2016, School Holiday Food Provision in the UK; Long et al (Sept 2007) "The impact of holiday clubs on household food insecurity; O'Connor, J., Wolhuter, C., Every, S., 2015, An evaluation of Holiday Kitchen 2014: Learning, food and play for families who need it most in the West Midlands: https://www.family-action.org.uk/content/uploads/2015/01/hk_bcu_report.pdf

# 3. Current out of school care provision in Scotland

There is a huge variety of before- and after-school and holiday childcare provision across local authorities. The majority of it is delivered by private, third sector and charity organisations, although often situated within school buildings and grounds. Childminders also deliver OSC provision. There are also a wide range of policies and strategies in place at local authority level.

Registered OSC services must operate within the same legal and regulatory requirements as ELC settings. They must be registered with the Care Inspectorate as 'Daycare of Children' services (if they operate for more than 2 hours and if their main function is to provide childcare). Staff working within these services are required to register with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) and must meet qualifications standards including a degree level qualification for all managers.

According to the Care Inspectorate there were 981 registered OSC services operating in Scotland in 2017, an increase from 686 in 2012.[29] For 738 this was their main service, with the remainder also providing childcare for younger children including ELC. There were also 648 breakfast clubs and 440 registered holiday services. Most regulated OSC services

(642) were either private, voluntary, third sector or charitable organisations. A minority (96) were delivered directly by the local authority. Services were predominantly concentrated in urban areas. These out of school care services were providing care for around 52,550 children in Scotland, compared to the 34,530 registered in 2012. In addition, 16,470 children accessed OSC with a childminder. Across all regulated service types 79,198 children aged 5 and over were registered with services for OSC.

As well as registered OSC services there are many supervised activity clubs (including Active Schools clubs; sports; drama, arts and culture focussed clubs) which operate during term time often for less than 2 hours at the beginning or end of the school day. These do not require to be registered or inspected by the Care Inspectorate. There are also many holiday clubs, which are, again, not required to be registered with Care Inspectorate: although they operate for more than 2 hours a day, their primary function is to provide activities for children rather than to provide a daycare service for children. It is not currently possible to quantify this provision across Scotland as there are no reliable data collected on these services.

In January 2019 the SSSC published their most recent figures relating to the Children's Services Workforce.[30] They report that in 2017 4,850 workers were employed in 736 stand-alone

OSC services with an average of 5 workers in every service. An additional 620 workers were employed in 44 holiday play schemes. The voluntary sector was the largest employer for OSC: 490 workers were employed in the public sector, 1830 in the private and 2,530 in the voluntary sector. The average number of hours per week worked in OSC and holiday play schemes was around 18. The average worker was aged 34 years in OSC and 25 years in holiday play schemes. The majority of OSC and holiday play scheme workers worked part-time (92% of OSC workers and 77% of holiday play scheme workers) and the majority (88% and 82%) were female.

Overall, the Care Inspectorate report that in 2017 84% of OSC services were found to be good or better in all quality themes (an improvement compared to 79% in 2016).[31] Local authority OSC services had the highest proportion of services rated good or better (94%) followed by voluntary/not for profit services (86%) and private OSC services (78%). In around 97% of childminders the quality of care and support and the quality of environment was found to be good or better in 2017.

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29  Care Inspectorate, 2018, Early Learning and Childcare statistics 2017: http://www.careinspectorate.com/images/documents/4680/Early%20Learning%20and%20Childcare%20Stats%202017.pdf

30  Scottish Social Services Council, 2019, The Children's Services Workforce 2017: https://data.sssc.uk.com/images/WDR/CSW/Childrens_Services_Workforce_2017.pdf

31  Ibid

# 4. Use of out of school care and participation in out of school activities

Analysis of data collected from Birth Cohort 1 (BC1) of the Growing Up in Scotland study (GUS) in 2012/13 (Sweep 7) provides information on OSC use at age eight.

Information on other organised out of school activities is also available from Sweep 8 and Sweep 9 of GUS when the cohort children were respectively 10 (in 2014/15) and 12 (2017/18).[32]

Additionally, in 2019 the Scottish Government commissioned a telephone survey of parents of 5 to 13-year-old children in Scotland to better understand what parents would like from OSC.[33]

While the two studies are not directly comparable – they relate to different time periods and child ages, and the questions asked and data collection methods are not directly comparable – similar patterns of OSC use were found across these data sources.

The majority of all parents (77%) in the 2019 parent survey reported using some form of childcare during term-time and/or the school holidays, while 23% used neither. Just under two-thirds of families in the GUS study (64%) reported using some form of childcare during term-time and/or the school holidays, while 36% did not use any childcare.

## 4.1 Term-time childcare

More than half (58%) of all parents in the parent survey used some form of childcare during term-time. A third (33%) of all parents used only informal term-time childcare (such as grandparents, other family or friends), 12% used only formal term-time childcare (such as breakfast clubs, after-school clubs and childminders), while 13% used both types. Overall, grandparents were the most commonly used type of term-time childcare (used by 37% of all parents). One in five (21%) of all parents used a breakfast and/or after-school club; 13% used breakfast clubs and 14% used after-school clubs.

Similarly, in 2012/13 slightly over half (53%) of families in the in GUS study used some form of term-time childcare (either before school, after school or both). The most popular childcare provider for both before- and after-school care was grandparents (11% and 31% respectively), followed by a breakfast or after-school club (9% and 14%). Of the families who said they used childcare before school, nearly a third (31%) reported using it every day of the school week. By contrast, of the families who used childcare after-school, only 18% used it every day of the week and nearly half (49%) said that they used it on only one or two days.

## 4.2 Holiday childcare

Around 6 in 10 (61%) parents in the 2019 parent survey used holiday childcare. Forty two per cent of all parents used only informal holiday childcare, 7% used only formal holiday childcare, and 12% used both. Grandparents were the most commonly used type of holiday childcare (used by 43% of all parents), while 16% used a play scheme or holiday club.

Around half of families (51%) in the GUS study reported using childcare during the school holidays. The most popular holiday childcare provider was grandparents (39%), followed by a play scheme, summer or holiday club (11%). Use of formal providers was more common during term time than for holiday care (43% compared with 14%).

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32  Unpublished analysis by the Scottish Government. Sweep 7 involved personal interviews with 3,453 parents or main carers; 3,150 families were interviewed in Sweep 8 and Sweep 9 collected data from 3,419 families, including a newly recruited boost sample. For further information about the Growing Up in Scotland study see https://growingupinscotland.org.uk/.

33  Hockaday, C. and Murray, L. 2019. Out of School Care – survey of parents in Scotland, Scottish Government: Edinburgh.

## 4.3 Out of school activities

A large majority of children in the GUS study were attending out of school activities; however, the proportion decreased over time from 89% at age eight to 84% at age 12.

Team sports were the most common out of school activity at age 12, with just over half (52%) of children participating regularly. Individual sports (46%) and art, music and performance (40%) were also popular. A minority (16%) of parents reported that their child did not attend any of the out of school activities listed.[34]

At age eight, individual sports were the most common out of school activity, with 64% of children participating regularly. Community clubs/groups were the next most popular (48%). Team sports were less popular at age eight (36%) than they were at age 12, as were art, music and performance activities (35%). A large majority of parents whose children were participating in these four most popular out of school activities at age eight reported that they were paying for their child to attend (between 82% and 95%).

At age 10 (Sweep 8), parents were asked how long their child spent in organised, structured activities outside of school each week. Just over half (53%) spent an average of up to five hours in organised activities per week, while a third (33%) spent five or more hours in out of school activities.

## 4.4 Children's age and out of school care/activities

In the 2019 parent survey, parents were more likely to use term-time care for younger children, aged five to seven (62%) or eight to 10 years old (64%), than older children aged 11 to 13 years old (48%). Holiday clubs were used more for children aged five to seven years old (20%).

Analysis using data from families in Scotland participating in the UK Millennium Cohort study – focussing on children aged five, seven and eleven years old (in 2005, 2007 and 2012 respectively) – explored OSC.[35] It found that usage of after-school clubs increased as children got older (from 11% at age five to 18% at age seven and 11 years old), while usage of breakfast clubs increased between age five and seven (from 6% to 11%), then decreased again at age 11 (to 8%). The analysis also found that throughout the primary school years, the percentage of children participating in sports clubs less than once a week or not at all dropped (from 49% at age five to 24% at age 11), while the percentage attending three of more days a week increased (from 9% at age five to 32% at age 11).

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34   The activities listed were: team sports, individual sports, art, music and performance, religious services/classes, academic classes/extra lessons, classes to learn new skills.

35   Guthrie, A., 2019, Out of school care in Scotland: who uses in and why? A research report commissioned by Parenting Across Scotland and undertaken as a Q-Step placement project: https://www.parentingacrossscotland.org/media/1453/pas_briefing_csv2.pdf. Data for the report was taken from the Scottish sub-sample of Sweeps 3, 4, and 5 when the Cohort Members were aged five, seven, and 11, respectively.

## 4.5 Out of school care is used primarily to allow parents to work

GUS data shows that families where at least one parent was working part-time or full-time were considerably more likely to be using any childcare than families with no parent working. Families where at least one parent was working were nearly three times as likely to be using any childcare before the start of the school day and more than twice as likely to be using childcare after school or during holidays, than families with no parent working. The use of formal childcare was also strongly associated with parental employment.

Similarly, the 2019 parent survey highlighted that both term-time and holiday childcare were more likely to be used by families in which all parents were working, either full- or part-time (72% of this group used term-time childcare and 71% used holiday childcare), compared to families where at least one parent was not working (where 30% used term-time childcare and 41% used holiday childcare). Single parents working full-time were the family group most likely to use both term-time and holiday childcare (85% and 76% respectively).

Relatedly, the main reason by far given in the parent survey for using both term-time and holiday childcare by those who used it was that it allowed parents to work (79% and 65%). While around a third of all parents said they did not use term-time or holiday childcare (33% and 32% respectively) because they/their partner could look after their child. Reasons for using term-time care differed somewhat for families with at least one non-working parent. While the most common reason was still that it allows the parents to work (32%), other reasons were more common, for example: it allows them or their partner to study/train at college or university (20%); their child enjoys it (17%); and for reasons related to the parents' health/disability (13%).

Similarly, analysis using data from families in Scotland participating in the UK Millennium Cohort study reported that 'childcare' was cited by 80% of parents/carers – rising to 90% in the highest socio-economic groups – as the principal reason for using OSC.[36]

## 4.6 Participation in out of school activities is primarily for children's enjoyment

Of the parents who reported that their child attended an out of school activity at age eight, the most popular reason given for their participation was that the child enjoys it (93%), while around 7 in 10 (69%) said it was for the child to learn new skills. Parents were also asked in the same sweep why their children did not attend any (or did not attend any additional) activities. The most popular reason given by parents was that their child did not want to attend any (or any more) activities (31%), with 29% saying that their child already does enough activities. A considerable minority gave reasons relating to practical difficulties for parents (23%) and cost (23%).

## 4.7 Socio-economically advantaged families are more likely to use out of school care/ activities

GUS data show that families in the top income quintile were more likely to report using any childcare than families in the bottom quintile (77% compared to 53%). Families in the top income quintile were nearly twice as likely to use childcare both before and after the school day than families in the bottom quintile. Considering area deprivation, more families in the least deprived quintile reported using some sort of childcare than in the most deprived (70% compared to 59%). While there was no difference in the use of before-school and holiday childcare

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36   Guthrie, A., 2019, Out of school care in Scotland.

across area deprivation quintiles, families in the least deprived quintile were more likely to report using
after-school childcare than families in the most deprived areas.

There is also a strong socio-economic differential in the use of formal OSC both in term time and during holidays. Higher income households and those where both parents (or lone parents in single parent families) worked at least 16 hours per week were more likely to use formal OSC than households on lower incomes or those where at least one of the parents was not in work. Results from modelling the joint effect of parental employment, SIMD and household income on the probability of using formal childcare providers suggest that area deprivation (as measured by SIMD) appears far less important in shaping the use of formal childcare than family characteristics like parental employment and household income.

The parent survey found fairly similar patterns for OSC use by household income and area deprivation. In terms of formal OSC, those on a higher income (more than £60,000 per annum) were more likely to use after-school and holiday clubs (34% and 38%, compared to 23% and 26% overall). Similarly, those living in the least deprived areas were more likely to use after-school clubs and holiday clubs (31% and 40%, compared to 22% and 26% overall). Those in the most deprived areas, however, were more likely to use breakfast clubs (31% compared to 22% overall).

Analysis of the UK Millennium Cohort study found that primary school children from socio-economically disadvantaged families had lower take-up of most OSC arrangements than their more advantaged peers, except after-school clubs.[37] Analysis using data from families in Scotland participating in the Millennium Cohort study also reported that, generally, the better educated and the higher the occupational status of the parents, the more likely they were to use formal OSC.[38] Although breakfast clubs showed a more even distribution of users across the socio-economic spectrum than other forms of OSC. The analysis also found that children in the lowest socio-economic groups were less likely to participate in sports or physical activity clubs compared with the highest socio-economic groups.

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37  Chanfreau, J., Tanner, E., Callanan, M. et al., 2016, Out of school activities during primary school and KS2 attainment: Centre for Longitudinal Studies Working paper 2016/1:
    http://www.natcen.ac.uk/media/1123192/cls-wp-2016-1-out-of-school-activities-during-primary-school-and-ks2-attainment.pdf.

38  Guthrie, A., 2019, Out of school care in Scotland.

# 5. What are families' experiences of the availability and affordability of out of school care?

The majority of families in the GUS study using OSC (87%) reported finding it either 'very easy' or 'fairly easy' to arrange suitable childcare during term time, with slightly fewer (79%) saying so about arranging childcare during the school holidays. The vast majority of parents who used childcare (95%) said that were either 'very satisfied' or 'fairly satisfied' with their current childcare arrangements.

Just over a third of parents (36%) in the GUS study that used some form of OSC said that they either had 'a great deal of choice' or 'quite a lot of choice' when arranging OSC. Around half of parents (50%), however, said that they had 'not very much' choice and 13% reported that they had 'none at all'. Families in the top income quintile were more likely to say they had a 'great deal' or 'quite a lot' of choice when arranging OSC (44% compared to 33% of users in the bottom household income quintile), and less likely to say they had 'no choice at all' when arranging OSC (8% compared to 15% of users in the bottom income quintile). Similarly, families in the least deprived SIMD quintile were more likely to say they had a 'great deal' or 'quite a lot' of choice than those in the most deprived SIMD quintile (42% compared to 30%).

Nearly 3 in 10 (28%) parents who were using some form of childcare reported finding it either 'very easy' or 'fairly easy' to pay for their child's OSC; however, a minority (10%) of families said they found it 'fairly difficult' or 'difficult'. Half of families (50%) said that they did not pay anything – largely due to the use of informal childcare providers. Families in the top income quintile were more than three times as likely to say it was 'very easy' or 'easy' to pay for childcare than those in the bottom quintile (51% compared with 16%). Conversely, the bottom income quintile were three times as likely to say it was 'very difficult' or 'difficult' to pay for childcare than those in the top quintile (10% compared to 4%).

The 2019 survey of parents asked specifically about parents' views on formal OSC. The report notes that those who used breakfast and/or after-school clubs were overwhelmingly positive about their convenience and affordability, which suggests that these aspects are crucial in ensuring access to these services. Among term-time childcare users who did not use breakfast or after-school clubs, some of the main reasons they did not do so were because they were too expensive (31%), there were none in their local area (15%) and the timings of the clubs did not suit them (11%). Users' views on play schemes/ holiday clubs were also largely positive, with the majority saying that the clubs were convenient and affordable. As with term-time childcare, holiday childcare users who did not use play

schemes/holiday clubs indicated that the main reasons they did not do so were because they were too expensive (39%), there were none in their local area (10%) or the timings of the clubs did not suit them (8%).

A significant minority of parents who did not use term-time care said that there were either no affordable breakfast, after-school or holiday clubs nearby (20%, 25% and 19% respectively) or that they did not know of any (19%, 20% and 16% respectively). Parents living in remote rural areas were much more likely to say that there were not any breakfast/after-school clubs in their area (66%, compared to 15% overall). Parents who said there were no affordable breakfast/after-school/holiday clubs near to them were asked if they would be interested in using these clubs if they were available. Forty four percent said they would be very/somewhat interested in using an affordable after-school club if it was available, and 31% said they would be very/somewhat interested in an affordable breakfast club.

# 6. What impact does out of school care have on children and parents?

Evidence on the impact of OSC on child and parent outcomes is limited. An evidence briefing published by NHS Health Scotland in 2015[39] (updated in 2018[40]) noted that there is a lack of recent, robust evidence relating to the impact of OSC in the UK.

## 6.1 Impact of OSC on children's outcomes

Overall, the limited evidence available suggests that high quality OSC may benefit children by promoting positive social interactions and relationships, building social skills and confidence, and providing the opportunity for play in a safe environment, particularly for younger children and those from the most socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds.

The NHS Health Scotland review found "very little robust evidence" relating to the impact of OSC on children from the UK, with much of the available literature addressing forms of OSC that are not relevant to the Scottish context (e.g. assessing specific targeted programmes in deprived inner-city areas in the USA). The review identified some broad positive impacts of OSC on children, including: building friendships with those from different ethnic or cultural backgrounds; developing relationships with adult role models; increased social skills, confidence and self-

esteem. There is also some "weak evidence" that indicates a link between breakfast club provision in deprived areas in the UK and short-term increases in levels of concentration, more primary school children eating fruit for breakfast, and fewer secondary school children missing school.

The review notes that the benefits of OSC are related to a child's socio-economic background, with those from more deprived backgrounds experiencing the greatest benefits. Based on this, they suggest that OSC must be of a level of quality at least on a par with the quality of care that families from less deprived backgrounds are able to provide to their children. Social interaction was highlighted as being of particular importance for 'only' children and those from rural or disadvantaged areas. The review also suggested that being able to engage in activities was of particular importance for children with disabilities or "special educational needs".

Evidence for some less positive impacts of OSC was also noted by NHS Health Scotland, including: primary school children showing greater conduct difficulties; secondary school children displaying less prosocial behaviour; tiredness; and lack of time spent with family. More broadly, a lack of appropriate provision for children older than eight was highlighted in the review, with older children reporting experiencing boredom. Given the majority of children attending OSC are aged between seven and eleven,

there is scope to further examine the age-appropriateness of OSC provision in Scotland.

## 6.2. Impact of out of school care on parent's outcomes

The available evidence suggests that the main potential impact of OSC on parents and the broader family is through positive labour market impact. The NHS Health Scotland review found evidence that using OSC allows some parents, especially single parents and those not in work, to remain in or secure employment, increase working hours or undertake further education or training. A European study (including the UK) found OSC increased female participation in the workplace. Other potential benefits include improving the mental wellbeing of parents/carers (for example, through reducing financial pressures and stress around having to arrange informal care).

Non-economic impacts reported by parents in deprived communities include practical support in terms of childcare to help manage crisis situations and provide respite. Play workers are also seen as an informal source of emotional support and as signposting to or helping to access other services.

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39  Scott E and Scobie G., 2015, NHS Health Scotland Evidence briefing on the impact of out of school care. NHS Health Scotland.

40  Unpublished report by NHS Health Scotland, Update on the "Evidence briefing on the impact of out of school care 2015", August 2018.

## 6.3. Impact of holiday programmes on children and parent's outcomes

Most evaluations of holiday programmes identified were small-scale and qualitative in nature, and as such their findings cannot necessarily be considered to be representative of holiday programmes more widely. Nevertheless, the existing evaluations considered here do point to a range of potential positive impacts for the children and families who attend.

Some evaluations have found that children tended to eat more regularly and more healthily when attending a holiday programme, and that they tended to be more physically active. Holiday programmes can provide children with the opportunity to be with existing friends they might not otherwise see in the holidays, and also to make new ones.[41] Holiday clubs can also help relieve the financial pressure on families through providing food to children, meaning that food at home lasts longer, and by providing activities free of charge for children, reducing the demands on parents to take them out. If parents are working it can be a valuable source of childcare that would otherwise be unaffordable, allowing parents to continue working over the summer period.[42]

A range of positive impacts for parents were also noted.[43] These included: eating more healthily and food at home lasting longer; a reduction in financial stress, both because food and activities were being provided for children and because, in some cases, holiday programmes acted as a form of childcare allowing parents to maintain their working hours over the holidays. Programmes can provide opportunities for parents to participate, volunteer, and access nutritional food and activities, which could play a role in increasing parental confidence, improving healthy food awareness, and offering informal social support through community networks. Some programmes reported decreases in social isolation and loneliness for parents, allowing them to interact and make friends with others in their community.

In relation to tackling food insecurity during the school holidays, it was generally seen as important to include activities as well as food. This helped to reduce the stigma by making the focus less about the affordability of food. In addition, fun, enriching activities add another beneficial element to programmes through increasing physical activity, learning, socialising etc.[44]

## 6.4 Impact of out of school activities on children's outcomes

Evidence on the impact of out of school/extra-curricular activities on children's outcomes is fairly limited. Compared to early years research, which has established the importance of the home learning environment and the activities in which young children participate, there has been much less research into how children of school age spend their time. As noted earlier, we know that disadvantaged pupils are less likely to participate in these types of 'enrichment activities'. There are, however, some studies that suggest that these types of activities/programmes can have small positive impacts on a range of children's outcomes and indicate that they could play a role in reducing the attainment gap.

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41  Defeyter, M.A. et al., 2015, 'A Qualitative evaluation of holiday breakfast clubs in the UK'; McConnon L. et al., 2017, 'Food and Fun School Holiday Enrichment Programme 2016'.

42  Defeyter, M.A. et al., 2015, 'A Qualitative evaluation of holiday breakfast clubs in the UK'; Forsay, A., 2017, Hungry Holidays; McConnon L. et al., 2017, 'Food and Fun School Holiday Enrichment Programme 2016'.

43  Defeyter, M.A. et al., 2015, 'A Qualitative evaluation of holiday breakfast clubs in the UK'; Forsay, A., 2017, Hungry Holidays; McConnon L. et al., 2017, 'Food and Fun School Holiday Enrichment Programme 2016'; O'Connor, J., 2015, An evaluation of Holiday Kitchen 2014.

44  Stewart H, Watson N & Campbell M., 2018, 'The cost of school holidays for children from low income families'.

Some evidence for children in England comes from the Effective Provision of Pre-school Education (EPPE) longitudinal study, which found that participation in learning outside of school hours was a predictor of progress in Maths and English between the ages of 7 and 11, after controlling for background characteristics.[45] More recent analysis of the longitudinal UK Millennium Cohort Study found that some formal activities were associated with attainment and social, emotional and behavioural outcomes at age 11.[46] Sports clubs and 'other' (unspecified) club participation was positively associated[47] with attainment outcomes at age 11. Participating in organised sports or physical activity was also positively linked to social, emotional and behavioural outcomes. Among economically disadvantaged children, after-school club emerged as the only organised activity linked to child outcomes: participation was linked to both higher attainment and pro-social skills.

Evaluations of after-school activities/ programmes suggest some positive outcomes although the research designs do not always allow conclusions.[48] The Children's University programme for pupils in primary schools combined outdoor learning activities, after-school clubs and community social action.[49] The evaluation[50] – a school-level randomised control trial – found that the programme was linked to slight progress in pupils' reading and maths performance. A smaller improvement in non-cognitive outcomes of 'teamwork' and 'social responsibility' was also found. The gains in teamwork and social responsibility results for disadvantaged pupils were better than the overall figures. However, the authors note that if changes in attainment alone are the primary goal, these relatively small effect sizes suggest that there will be more cost-effective routes to achieve this outcome.

The Education Endowment Foundation has assessed the impact of arts and sports participation on academic learning.[51] They underline that enriching education has intrinsic benefits and 'all children, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, deserve a well-rounded, culturally rich, education'. It is important to note that, in both cases, participation was defined as occurring either as part of the curriculum or as extra-curricular activity. Overall, they conclude that the impact of both arts and sports participation on academic learning appears to be positive but low. Overall, the evidence is rated as 'moderate' for arts and 'limited' for sports. Improved outcomes for arts participation have been identified in English, mathematics and science. Benefits have been found in both primary and secondary schools, with greater effects on average for younger learners and, in some cases, for disadvantaged pupils. They also note that participating in sports and physical activity is likely to have wider health and social benefits.

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45  Sylva, K., Melhuish, E. C., Sammons, P. et al., 2008, Final Report from the Primary Phase: Pre-School, School and Family Influences on Children's Development during Key Stage 2 (7-11). DCSF Research Report 61.

46  Chanfreau, J., Tanner, E., Callanan, M. et al., 2016, Out of school activities during primary school and KS2 attainment.

47  It is important to note that the methods used identify associations only; although the study controlled for individual and family characteristics, it is not possible to conclude that these relationships are causal.

48  Chanfreau, J. et al., 2016, Out of school activities during primary school and KS2 attainment.

49  Gorard, S., Siddiqui, N., Huat See, B. et al., 2017, Children's University: Evaluation report and executive summary: https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED581159.pdf; Gorard, S., Siddiqui, N., Huat See, B. et al., 2019, 'Can learning beyond the classroom impact on social responsibility and academic attainment? An evaluation of the Children's University youth social action programme', Studies in Educational Evaluation, 61: 74-82.

50  The evaluation involved 1,840 year 5 pupils in 68 primary schools, randomised into treatment and waiting-list control groups. The programme was delivered for two consecutive years after which the academic and non-cognitive outcomes were re-assessed.

51  https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/school-themes/enrichment/

# 7. Summary

There is a range of childcare available out of school hours, from registered OSC providers such as breakfast, after-school and holiday clubs, registered childminders, to clubs providing supervised activities before or after school or in the school holidays. There is no statutory duty or specific funding to provide OSC.

The literature highlights links between access to OSC and child poverty. Access to affordable and accessible childcare for school-age children has been highlighted by some research as a potential barrier to taking up or staying in good quality employment, or increasing hours. Costs of childcare may also put pressure on family budgets, and low income families may find the financial support available difficult to access. Research suggests that for low income families school holidays can increase financial pressure and may lead to food insecurity and missing out on opportunities that are available to children in higher income families. Some research suggests that the cost of childcare during school holidays may put pressure on family budgets or make sustaining work difficult, particularly for lone parents. Also that circumstances experienced during the school holidays – including poor nutrition, social isolation and stress within the family – can negatively impact on children's school readiness, cognitive functioning, and health and wellbeing.

Considering data from a number of surveys highlights that the majority of parents use some form of childcare during term-time and/or the school holidays. Grandparents were the most common providers of before and before-school and holiday childcare, although a significant minority use formal OSC. Additionally, the majority of children participate in some form of out of school activity, with sports being the most popular.

Both term-time and holiday childcare are far more likely to be used by families in which all parents were working, either full- or part-time. In particular, parental employment is highlighted as one of the key drivers of use of formal OSC in term-time. Further, the most common reason parents give for using OSC is that it allows them to work. Conversely, the most common reasons given for participation in out of school activities related to the child's enjoyment or development. Several studies underline that, in general, there is a strong socio-economic differential in use of OSC and participation in out of school activities. In particular, higher income families are more likely to use any childcare and formal OSC than families in the lowest income group.

The majority of families who use OSC are positive about their arrangements. However, slightly over 6 in 10 families in the GUS study reported a lack of choice when arranging OSC, and a significant minority reported finding OSC difficult to pay for. Low income families were more likely to report a lack of choice in arranging OSC and having difficulty paying for OSC.

Overall, there is a lack of robust evidence on the impacts of out of school care/activities on children and families. The available evidence suggests that the main potential impact of OSC on parents and the broader family is through positive labour market outcomes. There is evidence that using OSC allows some parents, especially single parents and those not in work, to remain in or secure employment, increase working hours or undertake further education or training. The limited evidence available also indicates that high quality OSC may benefit children by promoting positive social interactions and relationships, building social skills and confidence, and providing the opportunity for play in a safe environment, particularly for younger children and those from the most socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds.

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While there is a lack of robust evaluation of holiday programmes, the existing small-scale evaluations do show a range of potential positive impacts for the children and families who attend, including tackling food insecurity, and wider health and wellbeing, educational, and financial impacts. There is also some evidence showing that out of school activities/programmes can have small positive impacts on a range of children's outcomes and indicate that they could play a role in reducing the attainment gap.

It is important to note that, as children from socio-economically disadvantaged families are less likely to access out of school care/activities than those from more advantaged backgrounds; they are less likely to obtain the potential benefits that are associated with participation in these types of enrichment activities.

# Annex C
# Out of School Care
## Reference Group

| | |
|---|---|
| Louise Beaton | Aberdeen City Council |
| Dairmaid Lawlor | Architecture Design Scotland |
| Alison Morrison-Smith | Care and Learning Alliance |
| Norma Ruettimann | Care and Learning Alliance |
| Catherine Agnew | Care Inspectorate |
| Marion McCallum | Care Inspectorate |
| Louisa Walker | Care Inspectorate |
| Mark Willis | Child Poverty Action Group |
| Jackie Brock | Children in Scotland |
| Anthony O'Malley | Children in Scotland |
| Matthew Sweeney | COSLA |
| Rosamund Rodriguez | East Renfrewshire Council |
| Marie O'Hare | East Renfrewshire Council |
| Stephanie Kerr | East Lothian Council |
| Sharon Hayward | Education Scotland |
| Sian Neil | Education Scotland |
| Salena Begley | Family Fund Scotland |
| Carol Notman | Fife Council |
| Scott Gordon | Fife Council |
| Heather Douglas | Glasgow City Council |
| Amanda Kerr | Glasgow City Council |
| | |
| Rachel Cowper | Inspiring Scotland |
| Mairi Ferris | Inspiring Scotland |
| Graham McCulloch | Lothian Association of Youth Clubs |
| Jane Malcolm | National Day Nurseries Association |
| Gordon MacDonald | National Parent Forum of Scotland |
| Celia Nyssens | Nourish |
| Susan McGhee | One Parent Families Scotland |
| Lesley Tait | One Parent Families Scotland |
| Alison Clancy | Parenting Across Scotland |
| Clare Simpson | Parenting Across Scotland |
| Marguerite Hunter Blair | Play Scotland |
| Cherie Morgan | Play Scotland |
| Margot Black | Scottish Borders Council |

| | |
|---|---|
| Susan Shiel | Scottish Borders Council |
| Jennifer Ross | Scottish Childminding Association |
| Janine Ryan | Scottish Childminding Association |
| Maggie Simpson | Scottish Childminding Association |
| Andrew Dailly | Scottish Government, School Estates |
| Craig Flunkert | Scottish Government, Curriculum Unit |
| Kat Hasler | Scottish Government, Place Standard |
| Gillian Heavie | Scottish Government, Children's Rights |
| Suzanne Hutchison | Scottish Government, Attainment |
| Melanie Lowe | Scottish Government, Support and Wellbeing |
| Deborah Lynch | Scottish Government, Support and Wellbeing |
| Muriel Mackenzie | Scottish Government, Rural Economy and Communities |
| Elaine Moir | Scottish Government, Food Insecurity |
| Darren Tierney | Scottish Government, Social Justice |
| Paul Tyrer | Scottish Government, Social Justice |
| Irene Audain | Scottish Out of School Care Network |
| Andrew Shoolbread | Scottish Out of School Care Network |
| Pamela Fotheringham | Scottish Social Services Council |
| Ann McSorely | Scottish Social Services Council |
| Alison Precup | Scottish Social Services Council |
| Paul Zealey | Skills Development Scotland |
| Paul Gault | YoungScot |
| Marielle Bruce | YouthLink Scotland |

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