



Scottish Out of School Care Network

Welcome to our bumper Spring newsletter. Please remember to share this with the whole staff team and your parents on the board or committee too. Remember we love to hear feedback too.

We are delighted to lead with exciting news about our online training courses and our wee online shop. These new areas will be built up over the coming year so do check in for updates.

Patrick, our Practice and Training Officer has been out across the major cities delivering popular and much appreciated in person play training. Greig, our Physical Activity Training Co-ordinator discusses our new training of resilience and physical activity. Andrew shares the results of our recent survey on your experiences of Care Inspections, and we give updates on policy relating to Care Inspection and changes at the Social Services Council. As always, we remind you about sources of help for parents with childcare costs.

We have some updates from the Scottish Government School Age Childcare Team and Dr Penny Anderson shares her Doctoral research findings on gender in School Age Childcare. A huge congratulations to Penny on achieving her doctorate through this work- she has been a school-age childcare champion for many years. Also, thanks go to SOSCN Board members: Mairi Ferris, for highlighting outdoor play and how to make this accessible for all in their article, and Marie McQuade, for her insight into lifelong learning and childhood practice.

We close with a range of fun activities for the holidays.

So. Take a break, have a cuppa and browse through your Spring newsletter.

SOSCN Learn Online

School Age Childcare specific
training you can access anytime

New Online Courses

Launch Of Online Learning Platform

We are delighted to announce that our new online learning platform is now open. The platform aims to develop or refresh your understanding and enhance your skills in a range of subjects that you can put into practice, to help you deliver the best play and wellbeing outcomes for the children in your services.

Whether you're an experienced professional or eager newcomer, we aim to support everyone in the school age childcare workforce with high quality, sector-specific training.

Building on over 30 years' experience supporting thousands of school age childcare services, our goal at SOSCN Learn Online is to share the knowledge you need, in a format you can access anytime, anywhere.

Registration is simple and requires a few details. After you have registered you can enrol in any of the courses available. Currently we have courses in Staff Induction, Medication Management, and Play. Within the courses there are videos to help you learn, with quizzes to test the knowledge you have gained. All courses come with a certificate after completion.

<https://soscnlearn.online>

Register

Enrol

Learn

**Complete the
tasks**

Achieve

If you wish to bulk-buy courses for your staff, please get in touch at the email:

info@soscnlearn.online

Here's an overview of the courses currently online:

Induction for New Workers to School Age Childcare £22

This session has been created to give you an understanding of what working in school age childcare might look like, and give you the initial knowledge you'll need to help you get started.

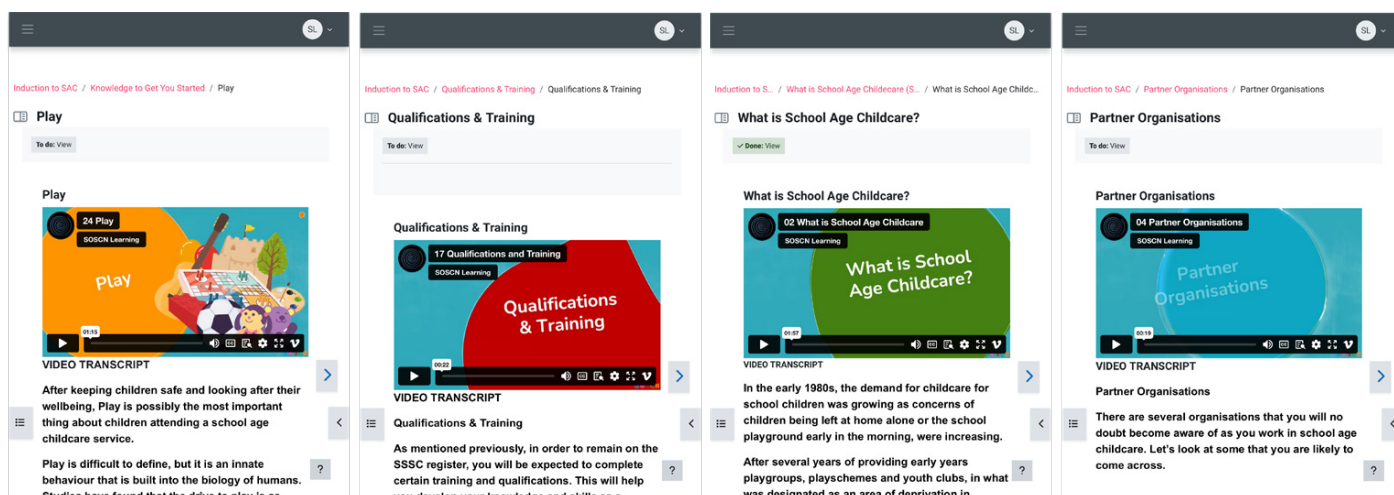
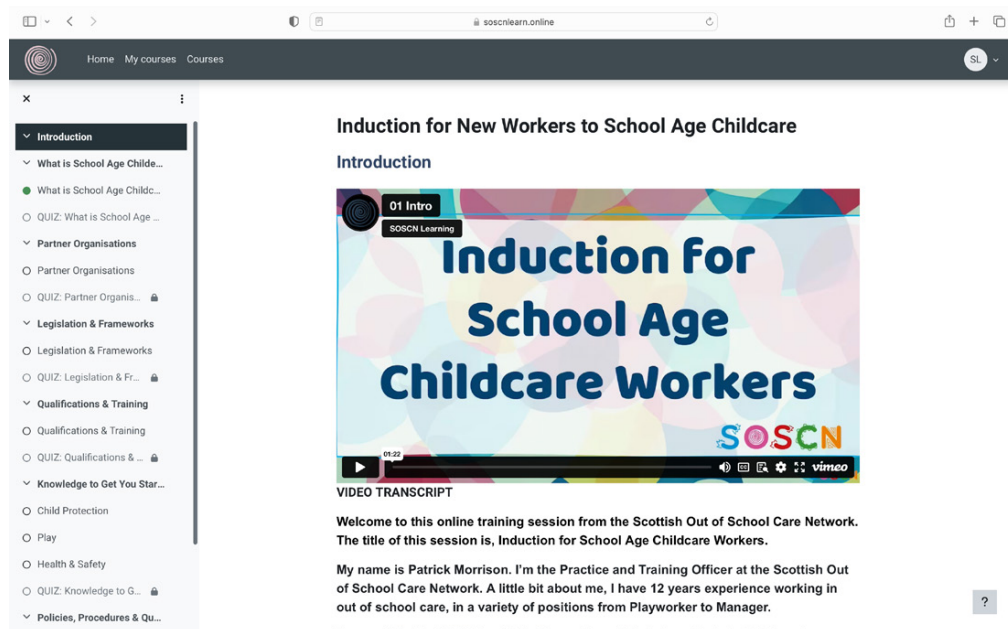
Every service is different though, so it's important you learn the specifics of your service and the children and families that use it.

Don't worry about taking all the information in at once during this session.

With access to this session, you can come back in the future and use the content as a point of reference.

This session has been broken down into 6 main sections:

- What is school age childcare?
- Relevant Legislation and frameworks
- Useful Knowledge to Get You Started
- Partner organisations
- Qualifications and training
- Policies, procedures and questions to ask



Play: Why, What and How?

£27

This session has been designed to give a fundamental understanding of play to those members of staff and volunteers who may have recently joined the school age childcare sector, who have never accessed training on the subject before, or to those more experienced staff looking for a bit of a refresh.

The screenshot shows the SOSCN Learning website interface. On the left is a navigation menu with sections: Introduction, Why is Play Important?, What is Play?, and Play Cycle. The main content area is titled 'Play: Why, What and How?' and 'Introduction'. It features a video player with a thumbnail of Patrick Morrison, Practice & Training Officer, with 12 years experience. The video is titled '01 Intro' and 'SOSCN Learning'. Below the video is a 'VIDEO TRANSCRIPT' section with the text: 'Hello and welcome to this online training session from the Scottish Out of School Care Network. The title of this session is Play. My name is Patrick Morrison. I'm the Practice and Training Officer at the Scottish Out of School Care Network. A little bit about me, I have 12 years experience working in out of school care in a number of capacities from Playworker to Manager.'

In this session, there's three main questions we're going to try and answer.

- WHY is play important?
- WHAT is play?
- HOW can we support play?

As members of the school age childcare sector, or what we used to refer to as the out of school care sector, we have a responsibility to advocate for play. To do that effectively, we must strive towards becoming experts in play, as we continue to further professionalise the sector and push for our knowledge and experience to be heard by our peers in other sectors we engage with.

You may well be an expert already, but it's important that you continue to develop and challenge your understanding of play, considering the theories that define it, the evidence to support it and the skills to facilitate and enhance it.

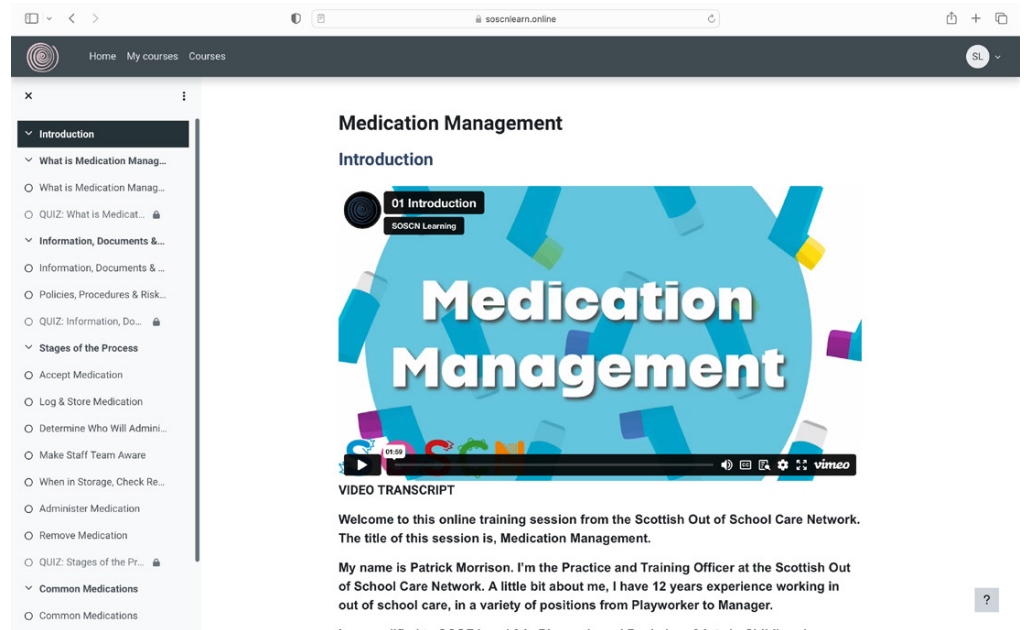
The goal of this session is that you complete it having learned something, gained a new perspective, or have a renewed passion to take into your practice to ultimately support the children in your services to have the best possible play experiences.

The four screenshots show different sections of the SOSCN Learning course. Each screenshot includes a video player and a transcript. 1. 'Play is a Human Right' (03 Play is a human right) shows a video about the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. 2. 'The Play Cycle' (24 Play cycle intro) shows a video about the Play Cycle. 3. 'Defining Play' (11 Defining play) shows a video about definitions of play. 4. 'Benefits of Play' (07 Benefits of play intro) shows a video about the benefits of play. Each screenshot also includes a 'VIDEO TRANSCRIPT' section with text related to the video content.

Medication Management

£27

This session has been designed to develop the knowledge and understanding of staff at all levels in the subject of medication management, and how to utilise this in practice, to ensure medication is stored safely, administered safely, removed safely, and everything in between.



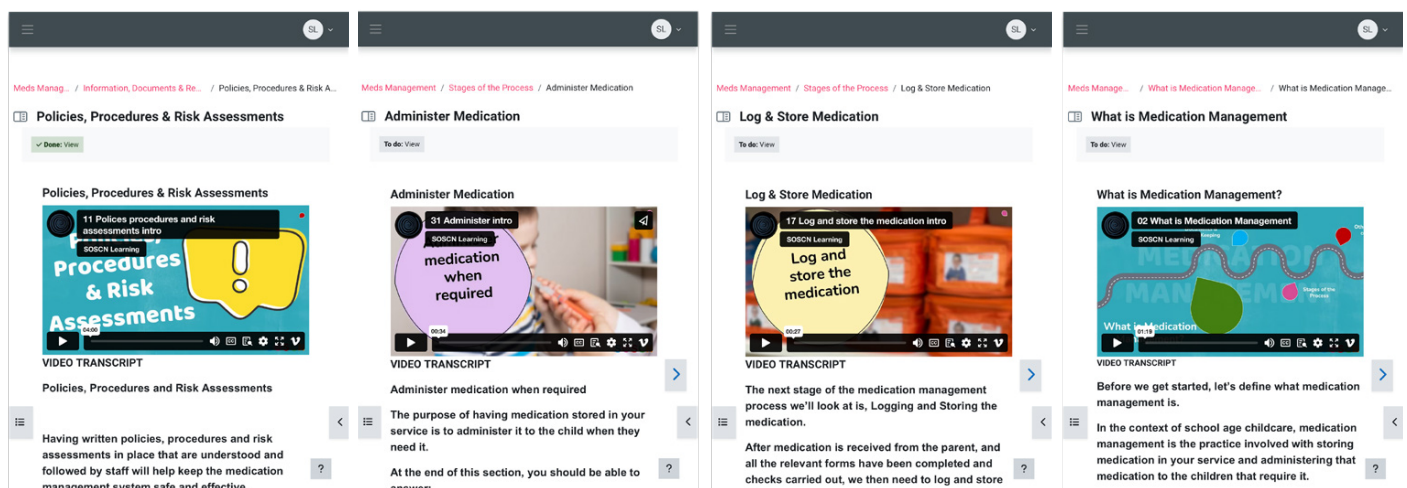
This session has been broken down into four main sections:

- What is medication management?
- The information that is required to be documented & recorded throughout the medication management process
- A detailed look at each stage of a typical medication management process
- Common medications you may come across

The management of medication in a school age childcare setting is a task that carries a great level of responsibility. The consequences that come with poorly managed practice in this area can cause serious harm to a child.

Mistakes are more likely to occur when policies and procedures are not robust, understood, followed or updated regularly.

This is no doubt a reason why it is common practice for service's medication management systems to be scrutinised during an inspection.



SOSCN now has an online shop

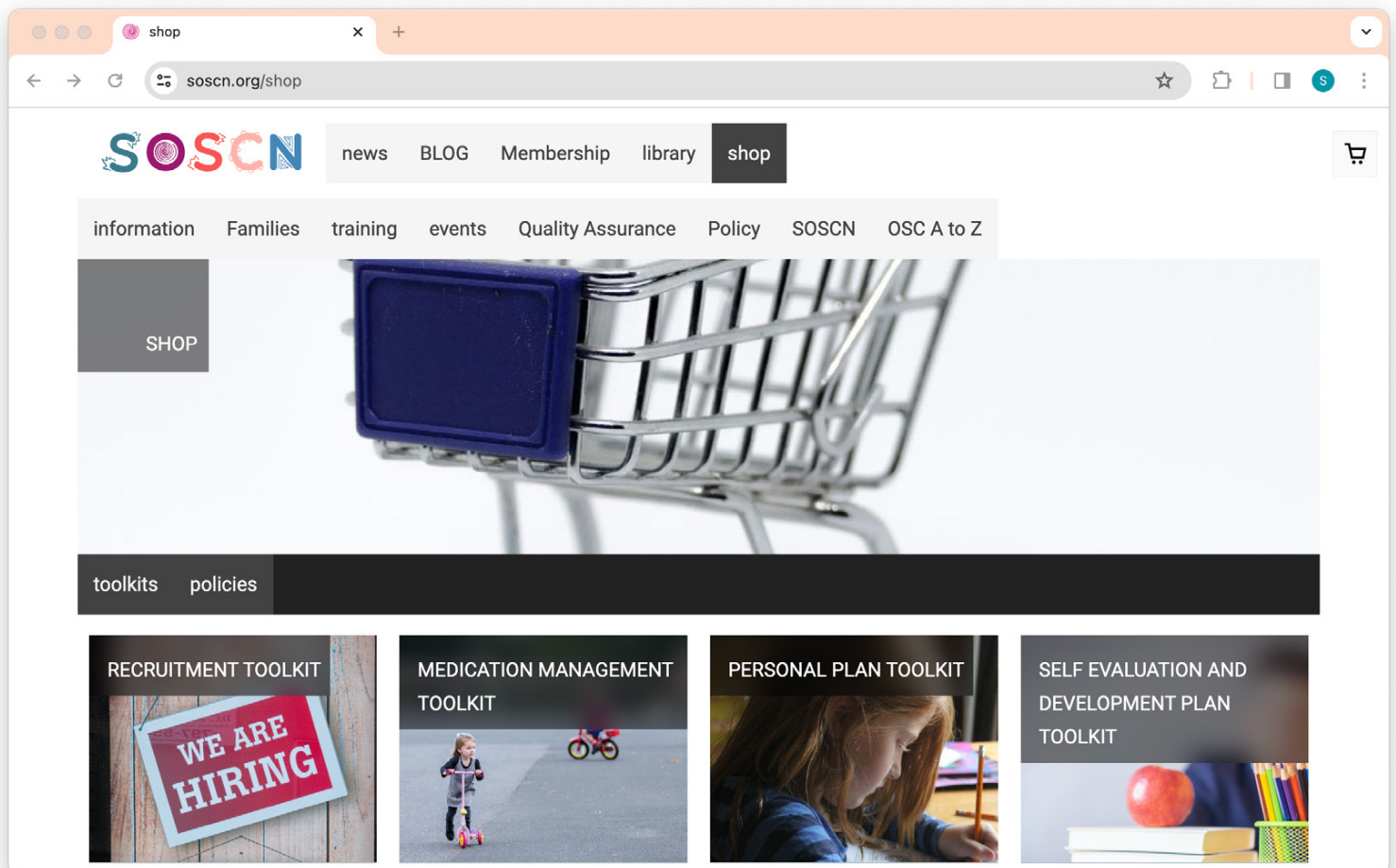
Thanks to everyone who has been purchasing the toolkits on offer in our new online shop. We hope they have been useful and look forward to listing some more products soon. If you have not had a look at the shop yet, then currently we have toolkits to help with recruitment, managing medication, personal plans, and lastly, self-evaluation and development plans.



<https://soscn.org/shop>

We will be adding more products to the shop over the coming months, however, please get in touch if there is anything that you would like to see here, be that another area-specific toolkit, a sample policy or template, or guidance with any other area of business or practice within your service.

Thanks again for all your support purchasing these items, we really appreciate it.



In-Person Play Training - March 2024 Report

In March, we delivered our brand new in-person training session; Play: Why, What & How?



Practice and Training Officer, Patrick, delivered sessions across the country in Stirling, Aberdeen, Glasgow, Dundee and Edinburgh, to over 100 school age childcare workers.

Amongst those who attended, there was a great range of experience levels. There were managers who had been working in the school age childcare sector for almost 20 years, and support workers who had only been in the role a few weeks. There was even one new staff member who hadn't started yet!

One of the great things about in person training is the ability to facilitate and encourage discussion, sharing of ideas and practice tips and healthy questioning of theories and practice guidance. These sessions contained plenty of this, as well as networking opportunities too.

The session was broken down into three main parts, with the aim of answering these questions:

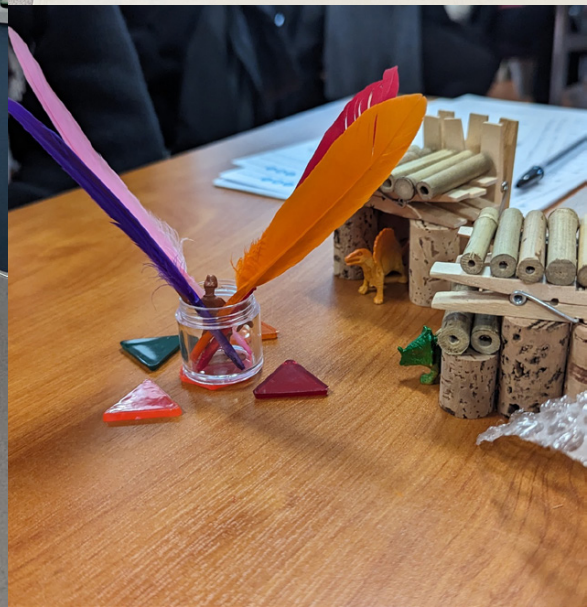
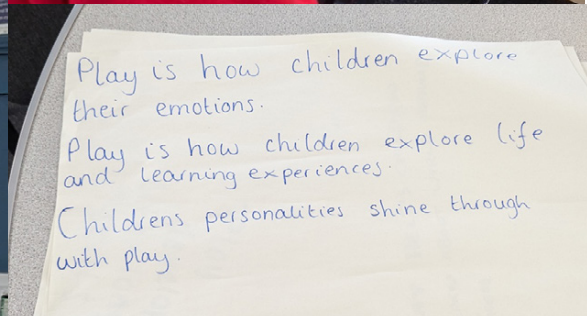
- **Why is play important?**
- **What is play?**
- **How can we support play?**

Participants were tasked with creating their own definition of play. It was interesting to see such a variety of contexts in which the word can be considered, which is a clear reminder that it is almost impossible to concisely define play as merely one thing.

Participants also got the chance to take part in some loose parts play, and let their imagination and creativity take over. This was a healthy reminder that adults need to play too, for our own wellbeing, and also for the development of our playwork practice.

Feedback was consistently very positive with 98% ratings excellent or good.

A big thank you to all those who attended and participated. If you missed out this time, we'll be hosting more in-person sessions later in the year. Alternatively, you can access our brand new access anytime, anywhere version (and more!) online at <https://soscnlearn.online/>



"I feel I have confidence to use what I have learned to express the importance of play to others."

Developing Resilience Through Play and Physical Activity

Greig Cavanagh, SOSCN
Physical Activity &
Wellbeing Co-ordinator

Developing resilience in children and young people can be a long process and involve several factors. Factors such as early childhood experiences, and adults influencing a child's behaviour and outlook on society can all have an impact on developing resilience due to the perspective the child has on the world around them.

The 'Centre on the Developing Child' at Harvard University tells us that the brain and other biological systems are most adaptable early in life, however that it is also never too late to build resilience.

In an out of school care setting, staff can impact and promote resilience in children by thinking about the some of the following:

- **Be Supportive:** Supporting children's ideas whether you think they are a good idea or not. For example, if a child has an idea for a game but you don't think it makes sense or the rules are not fair, let the child follow through with the planning process and arrange the game. The child may realise themselves that some aspect of the game is not working and look to you for guidance on areas of the game that could be adapted.
- **Avoided:** You have avoided a situation of de-motivating the child by dismissing their idea because you don't think it will work. This could impact the child's motivation to play games and activities in the future.
- **Outcome:** You have supported the child with their ideas and assisted them in making small changes to help improve the layout or rules of their game, resulting in the child feeling good about themselves and open to being creative with their ideas in the future. You have also improved your relationship with that child, you have supported and encouraged them throughout their idea.
- **Role Model:** Being a positive role model for children and young people is an important role when working in childcare. What children see and hear at home, school and in OSC has an impact on their development as they grow.
- **Praise:** Praising children is vital to promoting resilience. Praising children can encourage them to go outwith their comfort zone in the future and try new activities.

With this in mind, the Scottish out of School Care Network will host a 'Building Resilience through active play and sport' in-person learning session on Monday 10th June at the Albany Centre, Glasgow from 10.30am-12.30pm. More about this over the page.

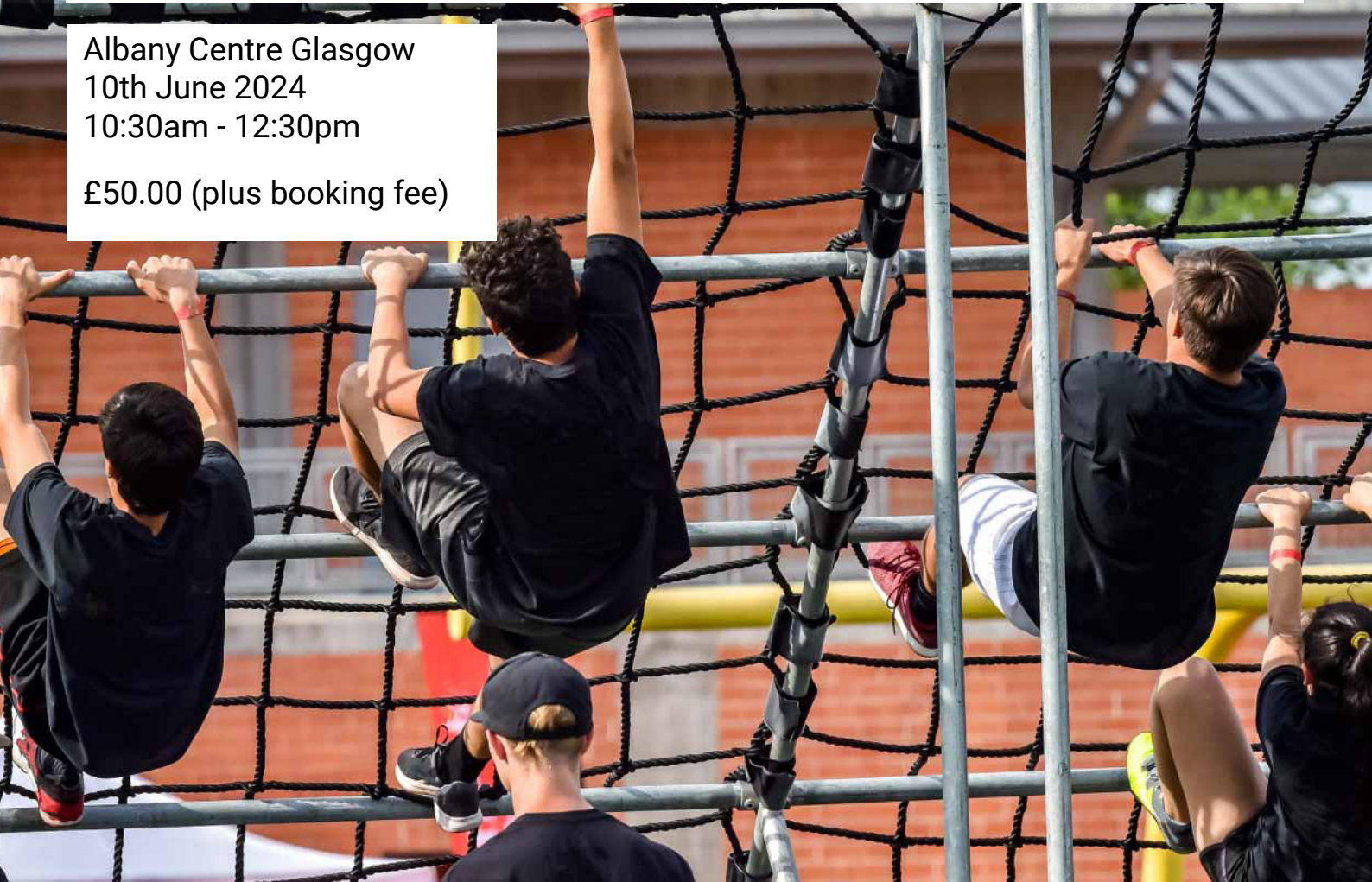
New SOSCN Event - Building resilience through active play and sport

Albany Centre Glasgow

10th June 2024

10:30am - 12:30pm

£50.00 (plus booking fee)



This June, SOSCN will be hosting a training session on 'Building resilience through active play and sport'. This session will cover how play and physical activity can help build resilience in children and young people by enabling them to access new opportunities and succeed in new challenges. The trainer will take participants through the Government's GIRFEC guidelines including SHANARRI indicators and look at what areas can promote resilience.

Participants are encouraged to think about times in their childhood or adult life when they have had to show resilience to overcome a barrier. Participants are also encouraged to think about people in their lives that have helped them understand and develop resilience.

Outcomes

Participants will leave the session with a clearer understand of the following:

- What resilience is and how can it be developed.
- How to spot signs of improvement in resilience within children at your service.
- How to approach low motivation in children when it comes to taking part in activities/sports.
- Resources and materials to help improve resilience.
- What you can do as a staff member to inspire and influence children at your service.

Booking Link

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/building-resilience-through-active-play-and-sport-tickets-866379342937>

Financial Support for Parents

All working parents earning under £100,000 should be entitled to financial support to pay for school age childcare



Did you know that working parents earning under £100,000 a year should be able to access financial support from the UK government to help pay for childcare? The amount available is between 20% and 85% of costs. If you don't know this, can you be sure they do?

There is little or no financial support directly available to school age childcare services so this is why it is important parents access what they can- the financial support from government to school age childcare services is effectively coming indirectly through parents.

What's available?

Low-income working parents on universal credit are able to access up to 85% of childcare costs.

Higher-income working parents earning up to £100,000 are able to access 20% support up to a total of £2000 per child, per year through the Tax-free Childcare system.

What could that mean for your service?

Say you charge £15 per session after school, a parent on universal credit could receive up to £12.75 in support (85%) meaning they only have to contribute £2.25 of their own money. A parent using the tax-free system would receive £3 in support meaning they have to contribute £12 of their own money.

If you charge £30 per day for holidays this would equate to £25.50 support to parents on universal credit, meaning they only have to contribute £4.50 of their own money, and a parent accessing Tax-Free Childcare would receive £6, meaning they have to contribute £24 of their own money.

Another point to remember is, if you have to increase your fees (which you should on an annual basis since your costs increase annually), effectively between 20% and 85% of the increase will be covered through these systems.

Marketing, marketing, marketing...

We know that many parents see childcare as being expensive and therefore think they can't afford it, however, what many don't know, and often what services don't tell them, is that financial support is available to pay for it. Services need to actively break-down the 'childcare is expensive' barrier to encourage uptake of places.

On marketing information, we recommend that services show not just fees but fees with universal credit and fees with Tax-free childcare support- clearly demonstrate how your service can be more affordable. Also, provide links to further information- make it as easy as possible for parents to see the actual cost to them, and how they can access the financial support they are entitled to. It's vital that you market the financial support not just to current 'signed-up' customers but also to potential customers- use it as a means of enticing them to use your service.

If you only remember one thing

Every working parent earning under £100,000 could be accessing some form of additional financial support from the UK Government to pay for childcare. A family may not be using your service only because they think it's not affordable- show them otherwise and at the same time demonstrate how their children will thrive and grow if they attend your club.

Further information

We shall be producing additional information and resources through our website and also online sessions over the coming months on this topic, however, please follow the links below for further information now.

[Please note that services need to be registered to participate in the Tax-Free Childcare system- there is a link below which tells you how to do this, if you have not already done so.]

SOSCN Webpage – Financial Support to Parents

<https://soscn.org/information/financial-support-to-parents>

Universal Credit Childcare Costs

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/universal-credit-childcare-costs>

Tax-Free Childcare System

<https://www.gov.uk/tax-free-childcare>

How to sign up to tax-free childcare if you're a childcare provider

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/sign-up-to-tax-free-childcare-if-youre-a-childcare-provider>

Childcare Choices – information about help available to pay for childcare (UK Government)

<https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk>

Parent Club – Get to grip with childcare costs and benefits (Scottish Government)

<https://www.parentclub.scot/articles/get-grips-childcare-costs-and-benefits>

Care Inspectorate inspections- experiences and perspectives



In November 2023 we conducted a membership survey to better understand services' experiences and perspectives on Care Inspectorate inspections. We received 109 completed responses, and would like to thank all of you who participated. Of the 109 responses, 71 were from main-service school age childcare (SAC), 15 were from ELC & SAC services, and 23 were from ELC only services. Responses were received from 25 different local authority areas across Scotland.

We realised that there may be sector differences in terms of experiences and perspectives and so have analysed the results by the three different sectors, although have focussed primarily on SAC in the overview discussion in the survey report. It should be noted since the response rate is low (71 services, or 10.4% of the total number of SAC services in Scotland), the data can only be seen as illustrative, rather than definitive.

What did we find?

Although we would encourage you to read the report, below are some summarised main findings.

In general, most people reported having a reasonably positive experience of the inspection process including knowledgeable and supportive inspectors who provided clear and supportive advice and information. Some people highlighted that they had very positive and respectful relationships with their inspector and felt that they could contact them at any point to discuss an issue outwith the inspection process.

However, there was a significant minority of services who said the opposite- the inspection process was not positive, information/suggestions were unclear or critical, and inspectors were not supportive or knowledgeable about the service.

In terms of how stressful people found the inspection process, this was more mixed, and although some people found it to be very stressful, their overall experience of the inspection process was not necessarily a negative one; this suggests that some people get very stressed regardless of how the inspection is conducted.

In terms of gradings, in general, services previously graded as 'weak' had improved, and those which were 'adequate' remained the same or had improved. The biggest change was between previously 'very good' or 'excellent' services- gradings were more likely to have dropped between most recent and previous inspections. Some services highlighted that they had last been inspected during COVID, so felt that this was then an unfair reflection on them now as their COVID grading stood despite no longer being in the pandemic. Other services, although perhaps disappointed at a drop in gradings agreed with this assessment since they recognised that they were not able to provide the same level of service post-COVID as pre-COVID.

A significant number of services discussed how they felt they were being inspected on an ELC-perspective rather than a SAC one- some mentioned they were asked about evidencing children's learning journeys, or providing food and activities which were much more appropriate for younger (pre-school) children than older (school-age) children, and for statutory learning services as opposed to non-statutory leisure services.

What next?

We have shared the results with both the Care Inspectorate and Scottish Government, and have highlighted the summarised points, and we shall seek to work in partnership with both agencies on a number of issues.

We would like to see improved clarity from the Care Inspectorate in terms of how inspections should be conducted (processes and systems), so that services know what to expect and also potentially challenge any decisions if protocols are not followed. This would also allow SOSCN to better support services prepare for inspections, and build the workforce's confidence when being inspected.

We would like to see much clearer Care Inspectorate guidance in terms of expectations and understanding of how SAC operates and what outcomes it delivers for children and young- it is not "ELC for older children" but something different. The forthcoming revised Joint Framework for Inspection may go some way to addressing this but we shall be keeping a close eye on not just the wording in this document but also the way it is implemented.

Read the survey findings:

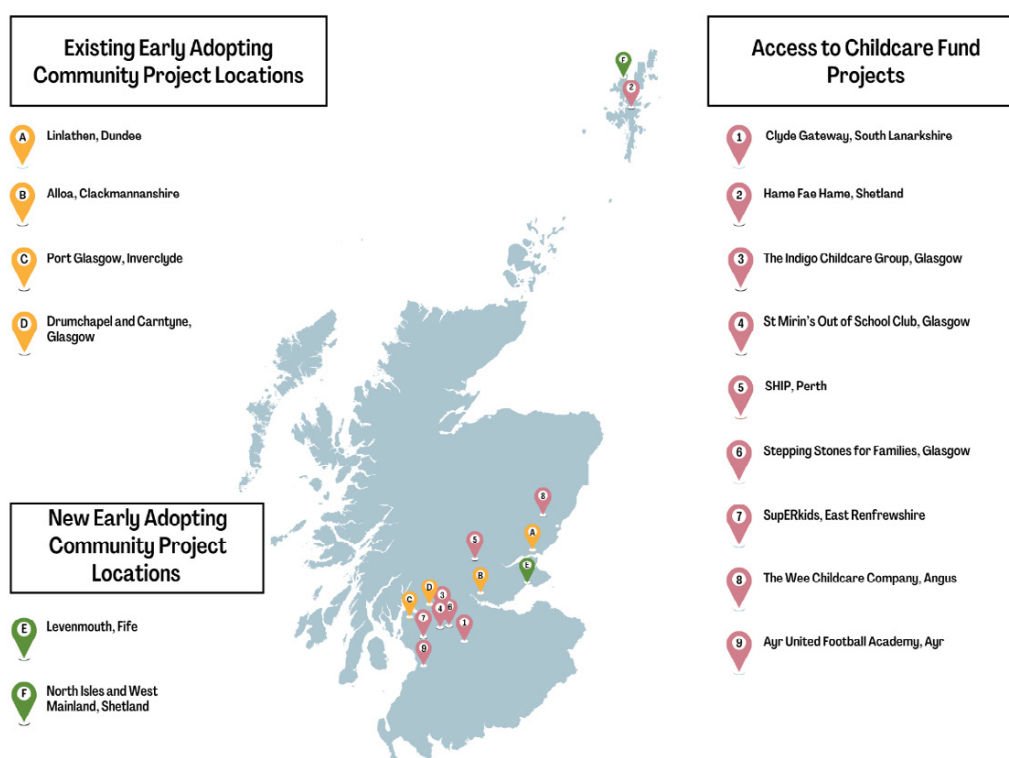
<https://soscn.org/downloads/reports/care-inspectorate-inspections-survey-results.pdf>



Scottish Government School Age Childcare Team Updates

Early Adopter Communities

In 2022, we expanded into community-level tests of change projects that seek to build and deliver an effective all year-round school age childcare offer for parents and carers in targeted communities, who identified as being in one or more of the priority family groups outlined in [Best Start, Bright Futures](#). Our Early Adopter Communities (EACs) were launched in Clackmannanshire, Dundee, Glasgow and Inverclyde and are taking a place-based, person-centred approach to their phasing-in of community-level systems of school age childcare. This year we will expand our early adopter work to include Fife and Shetland and we will also broaden the work to include younger children from the age of nine months, recognising how important both early learning and school age childcare are for families, especially those experiencing poverty. This investment will enable us to begin to create and test, for the first time, what an all-age childcare system will look like for Scotland.



Across all of the EACs, the focus is to test change by gathering stories from families and maximising learning to understand the opportunities and challenges families are facing. The knowledge and learning that we are capturing will help inform policy decisions at a national level to ensure we are supporting children and families as best we can.

Engagement and strong partnerships

Working with families at a local level has helped to further probe and understand the challenges they face, taking account of individual circumstances and needs, and testing a range of different service types which could meet those needs. Using the six priority groups as a lens and exercising local discretion has allowed for flexibilities to support kinship carers, families who have experienced trauma, students, and refugees. Partnership working with community-led, and third sector organisations has been key to the success of the projects;

providing a two-way process to reach the right families and provide the right support, at the right time. A range of measures have been put in place to support providers and families, including values-based leadership, trauma-informed training for staff, holistic family support, adjusting staff to children's ratios, and flexibility of services to support children to change provision to one that better meets their needs. This has helped build trusted relationships ensuring parents and carers have meaningful opportunities to engage with the services being provided. It has also meant that where a child displays dysregulated behaviour, or does not settle into a service, local delivery teams will work with providers to find a solution which could be adjusting staff-to-children ratios or moving to a different service that does meet the needs of the child and their family.

The inclusion of children whose families belong to one of the six priority family types was prioritised in our recruitment of children to participate in co-designing our [National Children's Charter for School Age Childcare](#) which has enabled us to identify children's priorities in relation to school age childcare. Some providers have told us they are already using the Children's Charter to plan and evaluate the quality and effectiveness of their services.

While our focus has been school age childcare, we understand from engagement with our People Panel and within local communities the cost and availability of childcare before and after school, and early years can be challenging. We have heard from the EACs that parents would not have been able to sustain employment if they did not receive funded school age childcare places. The expanded scope of EACs, to include children from nine months old to the end of primary school, as set out in the 2023 Programme for Government, will enable us to better understand the impact of all-age childcare for families living in areas of high levels of poverty in Scotland.

Cohorts of Families

Through our early adopter work, we have also been able to identify three cohorts of families who each have different childcare needs, different family support needs, and potentially different outcomes associated with funded or subsidised childcare offer.

Families that are furthest from the labour market, with policy intentions around improving children's outcomes, long term tackling child poverty objectives related to early intervention and providing benevolent childhood experiences.

Families where parents/carers are closer to the labour market but need the support of DWP or local Employability support services, for whom the costs of School Age Childcare would be a particular barrier to employment.

Families where parents and carers are in precarious or part-time employment. A funded or subsidised childcare offer may allow them to find more stable employment or increase their hours of work. Families where parents and carers are currently paying for School Age Childcare to support work may also come into this category – i.e. working parents on UC who would be eligible for UC Childcare.

We will use this insight around family cohorts to inform future development of EAC tests of change. We are developing an understanding of how particular priority types may be impacted financially by a funded school age childcare offer, supported by user journeys collated through the EACs to try to make them as realistic and informative as possible.

Independent Review of Inspection, Scrutiny and Regulation of Social Care in Scotland

Source: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/irisr-executive-summary-recommendation-report/>

The Scottish Government has responded to the independent review of Inspection, scrutiny, and regulation of care in Scotland, which was chaired by Dame Sue Bruce.

The Scottish Government has accepted all of the high-level recommendations, and although it will take time, there may be opportunities within this to update definitions of regulated services. The main themes covered were:

Theme 1 - a person centred approach – based on human rights and putting the user of services at the centre.

Theme 2 – what needs to be inspected, scrutinised, and regulated?

Theme 3 – how should inspection, scrutiny, and regulation be carried out?

Theme 4 – how will we know systems are working?

Theme 5 – how will systems of inspection, scrutiny, and regulation support the workforce?

Under theme 1

There are 7 recommendations which are all about taking a human rights approach, and in so, make the service user first and foremost in saying what they need and experience. Regulators should allow enough time and consultation in service users preferred formats in an ethos of trust, dignity, and respect.

For example,

- “1. It is recommended that inspection, scrutiny, and regulatory bodies consistently apply a human rights-based approach that places people at the centre of the process.
2. It is recommended that matters of trust, respect, relationships, ethos, and culture be placed at the heart of inspection, scrutiny, and regulation and should be reflected in reports.”.

Theme 2 – what needs to be inspected, scrutinised, and regulated?

Recommendations 8 to 12 under this theme are about bringing in parts of the unregulated social care workforce, such as PAs, and social care agencies into the regulated workforce. It also mentions working in co-operation with other countries’ regulatory bodies and learning from their good practice.

What is of more interest to us is this extract from the Executive Summary:

- “13. It is recommended that The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 be reviewed to ensure consistent, effective, and comprehensive applicability of the fit and proper person provisions across social care support services in Scotland.
14. It is recommended that Scottish Ministers make appropriate arrangements for market oversight and sustainability in the social care sector.
15. It is recommended that the list of care service types and set of corresponding definitions

as set out in Schedule 12 of the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010, are assessed for fitness for purpose.”

Whilst much of this is about standards, sustainability, and modernising definitions within care homes etc., everything above applies across the whole social care sector. So, for example, currently school age childcare comes under daycare of children, while ELC is both daycare of children and education (hence joint inspection), SOSCN believes school age childcare would be better served in regulation by having its own definition so that is something to explore here.

Theme 3 – how should inspection, scrutiny, and regulation be carried out?

The recommendations under this theme are very much about reducing duplication and working with the needs of users, it also adds recommendations on reporting on good practice and helping services with improvement action plans.

Theme 4 – how will we know systems are working?

“33. It is recommended that a review of the Health and Social Care Standards takes place to ensure they are based on human rights, ethical commissioning and are outcomes focused. The Standards should be the basis on which social care support services are inspected, scrutinised, and regulated. “

Again, this is about updating the standards to ensure it is person centred and based on human rights.

Theme 5 – how will systems of inspection, scrutiny, and regulation support the workforce?

“35. It is recommended that regulators and providers examine ways in which the workforce can become more actively involved in the inspection process, on a basis of mutual trust and respect.

36. It is recommended that Scottish Ministers align the social care workforce in a coherent model, based on fair work, to support the sustainability of the workforce and to help drive continuous improvement.

37. It is recommended that Scottish Ministers should review the sufficiency, quality, and availability of resources for training, development, and improvement.

38. It is recommended that steps are taken to ensure that nationally recognised qualifications that reflect the skills required to work in the social care sector are developed and are portable across the social care sector.”

Once again, there are perhaps some long term opportunities here in terms of reviewing qualifications and support to gain them. Fair work is, of course, based on the real living wage and from SOSCN’s point of view this may only be possible for some services to meet themselves, so we will continue to push for support with this.

This is a very brief overview of the longer term implications of the review, it is tied in with updates to the work of Disclosure Scotland and to the establishment of a national care service. Whilst some of the recommendations can be implemented without significant new resources, others will be dependent on related investment.

We and the School age Childcare Team at the Scottish Government will be keeping a close eye on developments here and how it will affect the sector in the longer term.

A Focus On Staff Wellbeing From April 2024 – Health And Care (Staffing) (Scotland) Act 2019

At the start of January this year, many of you attended an online session held with the Care Inspectorate looking at the Health and Care (Staffing) (Scotland) Act 2019 which comes into effect from April 2024. Although this legislation was passed by Parliament in 2019, implementation was paused until now due to the Pandemic.

How does the Act relate to school age childcare?

The aims of the Act are to enable children and young people to access safe and high-quality care; staffing that supports improved outcomes for children and young people, and a culture that promotes the wellbeing of staff.

What are the main principles of the Act, and how do they relate to school age childcare?

1. Improving standards and outcomes for children and young people.
2. Taking account of children and young people's needs, abilities, characteristics and circumstances.
3. Respecting the dignity and rights of children and young people.
4. Views of children, young people and staff are encouraged and considered.
5. Outcome for children and young people are improved when staff are supported well, ie. ensuring the wellbeing of staff.
6. Staffing decisions are openly communicated to everyone.
7. Efficient and effective staff allocation ensures children and young people's outcomes are improved.
8. Improved outcomes for children and young people through the planning and co-ordination of multi-disciplinary working.

You will probably recognise that most of the principles are not new, and in fact are things which you should already be supporting through your staffing approaches. Although that is the case, there is one significant addition: "ensuring the wellbeing of staff"- services will now need to demonstrate to the Care Inspectorate how they work towards ensuring the wellbeing of their staff.

Supporting staff wellbeing

At the seminar, when participants were asked how they supported the wellbeing of staff, the most common answers related to regular supervision sessions both collectively and individually, both formal and informal, which allowed for discussions and information-sharing.

So, in many ways, staff wellbeing is no different from children and young people's wellbeing since trusting and caring relationships are at the heart of it all- people need to feel connected, listened-to, safe and nurtured. The SHANARRI wellbeing indicators can be applied not just to children and young people but also staff.

SOSCN are currently developing some resources to support staff wellbeing which will be available before summer, but in the meant time, we would love to hear more about how you support the wellbeing of staff.

Further information and resources about the Act:

Care Inspectorate- SOSCN Seminar Presentation

<https://soscn.org/downloads/events/soscn-webinar-with-aha-responses.pdf>

Care Inspectorate Youtube Video Safe Staffing: Summary of Health and Care Act 2019

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vr-Mpb2uDzI>

Care Inspectorate Safe Staffing: Information for Children and Young People Services

<https://hub.careinspectorate.com/how-we-support-improvement/quality-improvement-programmes-and-topics/safe-staffing-programme-information-for-cyp-services/>



Are you ready?



Purpose of the Act

The Health and Care (Staffing) (Scotland) Act 2019 comes into effect on 1 April 2024. The aims of the Act are to enable:

- children to experience safe and high-quality care
- staffing that supports improved outcomes for children
- a culture that promotes the wellbeing of staff.

What this means in practice

- 1 Appropriate induction, training and support linked to staff's CPD
- 2 Staff consider and plan for children's individual care, play and learning needs
- 3 Values are underpinned by the UNCRC
- 4 Views from children, families and staff are encouraged and considered
- 5 Children feel secure when staff are fulfilled and supported
- 6 Staffing decisions are openly communicated
- 7 Right people, right place, right skills, right time
- 8 Children reach their potential as people work well together

For more information about safe staffing and questions, please scan the QR code



SCAN ME



Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) – Forthcoming Changes

You should know by now that the SSSC are making some changes to the Register and some of their registration process; these changes are planned for introduction on Monday 3rd June 2024.

From this date the number of Register parts will be reduced to 4, school age childcare workers will join “Children and young people workforce”. Current registrants don’t need to do anything as you will be automatically moved to the new part of the Register.

For registrants due to renew from March 2024 to May 2024 you won’t have to complete the renewal process although you will still have to pay your renewal fee. Anyone in this category should receive information about this from the SSSC.

The deadline for submitting applications for new registration is 5pm on 10th April 2024. Thereafter, no new applications will be accepted until 3rd June. The system will not save partial applications so please encourage anyone applying for registration to submit before the deadline. The Care Inspectorate know the SSSC are making changes and pausing applications and renewals.

Adult Social Care Qualifications Will Become Registerable For Children’s Services (And Vice Versa)

The SSSC are also going to take a more flexible approach to qualifications for registration to allow people to move between adult social care, and children and young people services without having to gain two different qualifications.

The standard qualification for workers in adult services is the SVQ Social Services and Healthcare and for workers in children’s services it’s the SVQ Social Services (Children and Young People) qualifications. From June 2024, the SSSC will now accept either of these qualifications for registrants working in both adult and children’s services.

The SSSC will ask registrants moving to another type of service to complete some extra learning, for example child or adult protection, as part of their CPL rather than doing another qualification.

Changes To Continuous Professional Learning (CPL)

The SSSC are introducing new continuous professional learning (CPL) requirements for registrants with a focus on key skills and knowledge. They have developed the requirements in consultation with registrants, employers and other key stakeholders and will introduce the new requirements on 3 June 2024.

What’s different?

The new CPL requirements include:

- an annual declaration that you’ve completed your CPL
- moving away from recording hours and days to focus on key skills and knowledge required at different career stages, for example, induction, change of role, return to practice

- mandatory skills and knowledge requirements on trauma awareness and adult and child protection for all registrants
- mandatory learning for people moving across the Register from adults to children services and vice versa, to support flexibility of qualifications for registration
- new requirements for newly qualified social workers (NQSW) and how their CPL is endorsed by employers
- flexibility for the SSSC to revise CPL requirements to respond to emerging skills gaps.

Learning to suit your needs

The new CPL requirements are set out for different groups and each will have learning based on their individual needs:

- social workers (including NQSW)
- social care workforce
- children and young people workforce
- Care Inspectorate authorised officers.

Pathways

The new CPL requirements have eight pathways, which help to personalise the learning registrants will do based on their career stage. The eight pathways are:

- I am new to my role
- I want to return to practice after a career break
- I want to complete a professional qualification
- I want to keep my practice up to date
- I want to specialise
- I want to change jobs
- I want to retire
- I want to take a career break.

Core learning elements

Registrants will choose the pathway most suitable for them to see the core learning elements they should cover to meet their CPL requirements.

For the social care and children and young people workforces there are seven core learning elements:

- rights based and ethical practice
- communication and relationships
- wellbeing and support
- protection
- knowledge for your role
- reflective practice
- leadership and quality assurance.

Further information about CPL changes

<https://news.sssc.uk.com/news/a-new-approach-for-cpl>

Revised Codes Of Practice

The SSSC are publishing the revised Codes of Practice on 1 May 2024 and they will take effect straight away. During the Codes' review, most people said they liked the simple and clear wording of the Codes, so the SSSC have only made changes where necessary.

<https://news.sssc.uk.com/news/next-steps-for-the-revised-codes>



Making Outdoor Play accessible for All

Mairi Ferris, SOSCN Board Member and Thrive Outdoors Manager, Inspiring Scotland.

As convener and founder signatory of Scotland's National Position Statement on Outdoor Play and Learning, Inspiring Scotland believes that "It is our shared responsibility to support and enable all [emphasis added] of Scotland's children and young people to access our diverse greenspaces and natural landscapes and to empower them to enjoy these spaces for the purposes of playing and learning.

So how do we do this when some children and young people have specific accessibility needs? A supplementary Out to Play document (Section 11) was published in 2021 designed to support the delivery of outdoor experiences for children with additional support needs.

This section complements Out to Play and aims to provide practical guidance for:

- people supporting children with additional support needs in their ELC or OOSC settings
- managers and teams planning and preparing their setting to be inclusive for children and families from the beginning of the placement.

This is a great starting point for considering how to plan for inclusive outdoor play, how to identify, create and use outdoor play to benefit all children and what staffing and practice needs you may have to put in place to support your children to access engaging outdoor play experiences.

In 2022-2023, Thrive Outdoors' Outdoor Community Play fund worked with a portfolio of five organisations to consider inclusive play from a community-based perspective. As part of this work, over 100 families also gave feedback on their experiences of accessing outdoor play for their children particularly in the colder weather. Although, centred around free-to-access play in the community, some of the challenges raised in the Winter Play Survey will also be pertinent for School Age Childcare providers to consider.

continued over...



We also asked families what organisations could do to make their outdoor play more accessible and three key themes were identified:

1. Offer sheltered spaces

Outdoor play spaces should offer a sheltered space for children to take a break from playing - whether that be an indoor space, under a tarpaulin, or simply under the trees.

2. Inclusive facilities and communications

Outdoor play spaces should have accessible toilets and changing facilities close to the site, as well as nearby parking. If possible outdoor play spaces should be accessible by wheelchair, such as using access mats. The available facilities should be communicated to families in promotional materials, using inclusive language and formats.

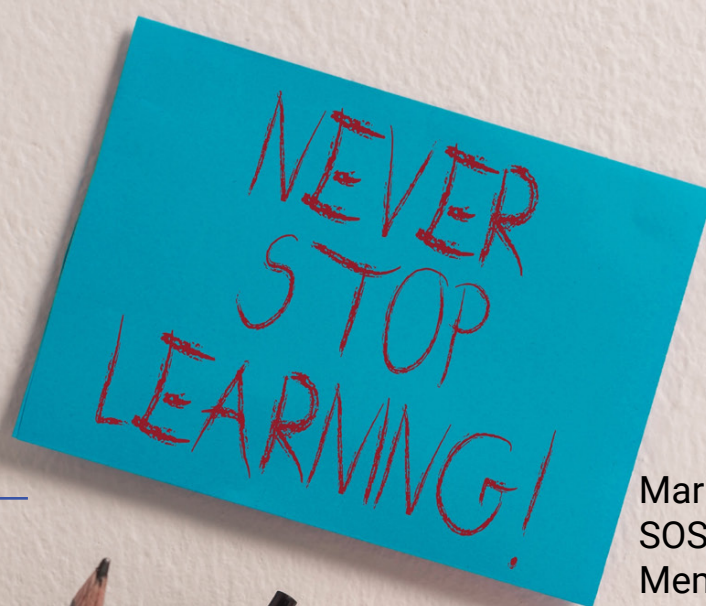
3. Provide confident and supportive staff

Staff should be confident including children with ASN in outdoor play sessions. Organisations should ensure staff have capacity to adapt sessions to different needs of children and families as well as being trauma informed.

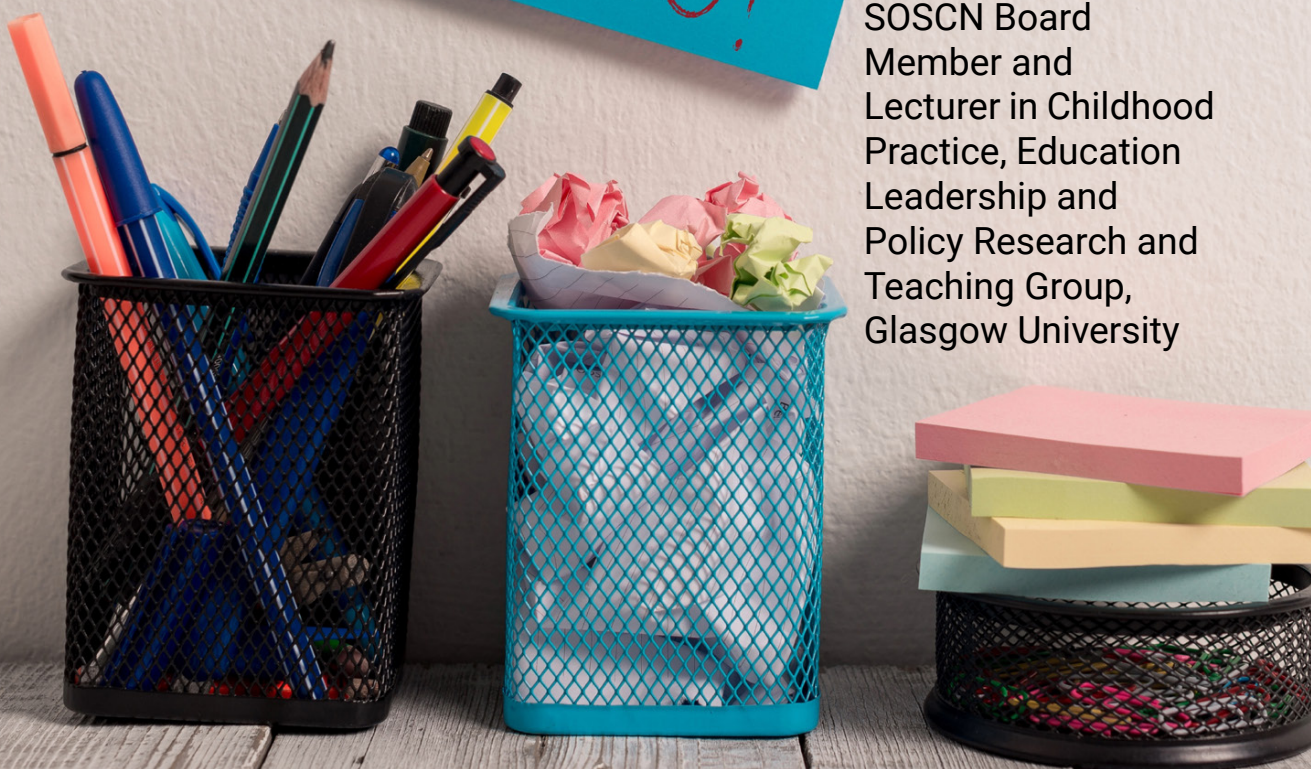
Several resources were developed in partnership with the organisations involved in the Additional Support Needs Outdoor Community Play work including podcasts and bitesize practitioner tips. These can all be accessed via Thrive Outdoors' new website:

<https://thriveoutdoors.org.uk/>

Embracing Lifelong Learning in Childhood Practice



Marie McQuade,
SOSCN Board
Member and
Lecturer in Childhood
Practice, Education
Leadership and
Policy Research and
Teaching Group,
Glasgow University



Today, let's delve into a topic that's never far from the surface in School Age Childcare services, the importance of continuous learning and the potentially transformative power of degree level studies in the Scottish Childhood Practice sector.

In the dynamic environment, practitioners play a crucial role in supporting play, development and learning. But what sets apart an exceptional practitioner? Often, it is their dedication to ongoing professional development and learning, coupled with their awareness of the impact of leadership and practice on children's outcomes. We know from research, that high-quality childhood practice can significantly influence a child's cognitive, social, and emotional development. By engaging with coursework, classroom discussions, debates and reflections, practitioners develop the knowledge and skills needed to promote excellence in their establishments, pursue continual improvement and innovation, and inspire high performing teams. Even the most seasoned practitioners, full of passion and experience, value the knowledge, connections and relationships developed through their studies. Along the way, they discover new perspectives, engage in critical reflection, refine their practice and build connections across the sector. The result: a renewed sense of purpose, enhanced job satisfaction, and a deepened commitment to the profession.

Further, the Childhood Practice degree or PGDE qualification can open doors to a world of opportunities within the field of childhood practice. From leadership roles to specialised areas such as children's rights or early intervention, advanced qualifications empower practitioners to carve out fulfilling career paths tailored to their interests and strengths.

But let's not forget the ripple effect of lifelong learning on the broader community. As practitioners expand their knowledge base and refine their skills, they become advocates for change, driving innovation and excellence within the sector and shining a light on the valuable work undertaken every day with children and young people. Whether through evidencing excellent practice, taking part in mentoring programs and research initiatives, or supporting multi-disciplinary family outreach efforts, practitioners have the power to shape the future of the profession and positively impact countless lives along the way. Further, there is an often hidden cumulative effect of professional learning as leaders and future leaders show engagement with study and research-informed practice, in line with the Standard for Childhood Practice (SSSC, 2015), they inspire and influence those around them to upskill and develop their own leadership practice.

So whether you are considering pursuing an undergraduate or postgraduate childhood practice qualification, attending professional development workshops, or simply engaging with the latest research in the field, every step towards self-improvement is a step towards creating brighter futures for the children in our care.

Alongside being a board member of SOSCN, I am also a university lecturer in the field of childhood practice. As such, I have the privilege of witnessing firsthand the incredible impact that our students have on the School Age Childcare sector. Every semester, staff are inspired by their passion, dedication, and willingness to develop their academic skills and leadership. Through engaging discussions, practice presentations, and reflective assignments, we see their confidence grow as they apply theoretical concepts to real-world scenarios. Whether it's implementing innovative strategies to engage children, advocating for children's rights, or leading professional development sessions for their colleagues, our students continually demonstrate their commitment to excellence and their dedication to the children and families they work with.

If you are considering further study, you might want to join the many school age childcare practitioners, leaders and managers who study BA Childhood Practice, exploring how their effective and inspirational leadership can support outcomes for children, families, and teams across the sector.

If you work in the SAC sector and have a degree already, from *any* subject, you may want to consider embarking on the University of Glasgow's M.Ed/PGDE Childhood Practice. This qualification is SSSC approved for registration as manager in the sector and as this is the only Postgraduate Childhood Practice qualification, affords the opportunity to engage with colleagues from across the country discussing practice, theory and research pertaining to your work in the sector. If you'd like to discuss your undergraduate or postgraduate learning journey, please don't hesitate to get in touch: Marie.McQuade@glasgow.ac.uk.

Care and Gender: A time worn narrative? Perceptions of Carework in the Scottish Out of School Care Workforce.

Dr Penny Anderson Ed.D



Dr Penny Anderson worked for over 27 years in school age childcare and was a founder director of MACS (Mearns After-school Care Service). After gaining a Masters of Education in Childhood Practice, Penny decided to undertake a Doctorate in Education which she completed in 2022. Although now retired from MACS she is an associate tutor at the University of Glasgow. In this article Penny shares the focus and findings from her doctoral research.

Key Research Questions

Research Questions One: How do OSC practitioners observe and construct a sense of professional identity over time? Do these observations have any temporal effect on professional career resilience?

Research Question Two: What regimes of power or governances, if any, are highlighted as dominant in professional childcare settings and do they exert any temporal influence over OSC practitioners' careers or decision-making?

Research Question Three: How do OSC practitioners distinguish any gendered discourses attached to performing care? What importance, if any, is placed on the notion of the right skills or 'being' a good carer?

Research Question Four: What relevance do the OSC practitioners' constructions of care hold for the future of recruitment, retention, and career resilience planning in OSC and allied care professions?

Summary Of Findings:

For SAC practitioners, upholding care responsibilities seemed to be part of our very being. Sometimes we protect those responsibilities at all costs, trying to live up to expectations that draw on discourses of the good mother. This includes how discursively constructed protective responsibilities and values can transfer from the practice of 'mothering' in private spaces into workplace situations.

Balancing life and work expectations can come at a sacrifice trying to meet those responsibilities. Women, who make up the personnel in most caring professions, often strive to live up to their own and others' expectations, as constructed through discourses of the good mother. Meeting expectations framed through the professionalisation agenda has been particularly challenging for SAC with concerns about the number of staff who were being lost to the profession, due to requirements of upskilling the workforce.

Personal resilience was demonstrated in how practitioners adapted to pressures from both work and caring responsibilities. There was an awareness of how infringements to regulations, such as, meeting qualification requirements, set by professional bodies, acted as a potential threat to the viability of employment.

Significantly, the practitioners did not believe that the qualifications would alter their undervalued status, nor would it affect performances of care.

In relation to diversity in recruitment, there was too much focus on skills that reside in perceived gendered traits and characteristics. In addition, language within professional discourses such as recruitment marketing campaigns and within documents promoting the right skills for childcare, do not allow for gender flexible caring identities. Women practitioners are surrounded by policies and practices which embed protection to such a level that it is reflected in both their private and professional caring. The findings indicate that maternal gatekeeping is extending from women protecting children in private spaces to women implicitly and unknowingly protecting women's opportunities in professions where women are in the numerical majority, and this may act as a barrier to breaking down the gender divide in the profession.

THANK YOU!

Thanks to all our guest contributors to the newsletter. If you think you would like to contribute something about your experiences with anything school age childcare, please get in touch.

Practical Activities Ideas



Easter Egg Hunt

Instead of hiding eggs about the place as normal, you could use a camera to take photos of recognisable items around the service, trying not to make it too easy. For example, if you are based in a school and have access to the playground, you could take a photo of a section of play equipment. Another idea could be a close up photo of a game that the children like to play that maybe isn't too recognisable at first. Then show the children the photos to see if they can recognise them and let them go and find the items in teams with a member of staff. If you give out eggs of some sort, you could put an egg beside each item, or have them at the last item you show.



Paint Eggs

Classic activity here. However, to give it some structure, you could ask the children to paint themselves on their egg, or their favourite book or computer game character.

You could also then use these eggs for the egg hunt.

Plant Flowers

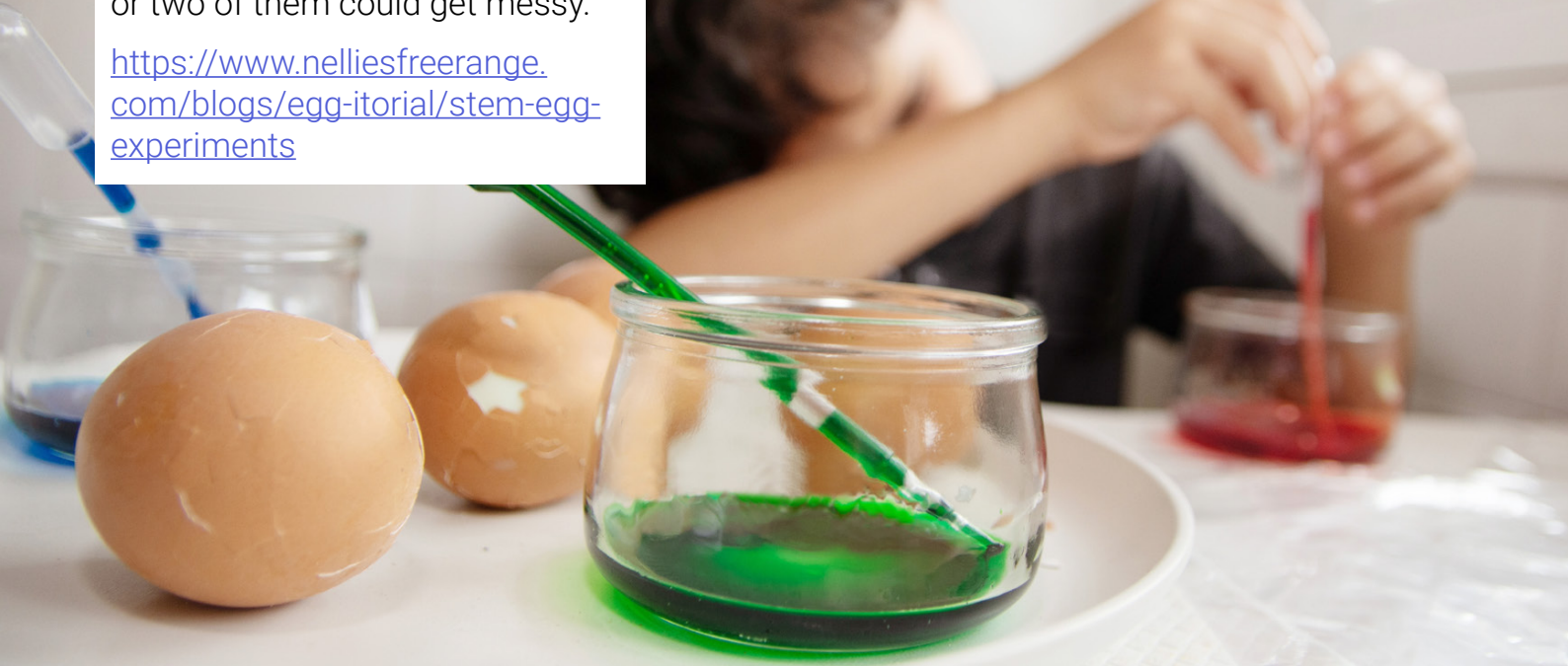
Depending on the weather, it might be a good time to plant some flowers in wooded areas if you have them near your service. Alternatively, you can make your own 'seed-bombs' and go on an expedition to plant them: <https://scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk/resource/make-your-own-seed-bombs>



Eggperiments

Continuing with the egg-theme. There are 5 great egg-based STEM experiments that you can find at the link below. Just be careful, one or two of them could get messy.

<https://www.nelliesfreerange.com/blogs/egg-itorial/stem-egg-experiments>



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Easter Bonnet DIY

Whether you call it a bunnet or a bonnet, this activity could keep children busy for a while and give them something to wear at the end of it.

<https://www.redtedart.com/easter-bonnets/>

Make Bunny Ears

Another classic Easter activity here. Only difference is there are 5 different methods you could choose from to give children of different ages and abilities a try.

<https://www.wikihow.com/Make-Bunny-Ears>



Thank you for reading.
Please get in touch
if you have any
comments or would
like to find out more
about anything in this
newsletter.



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