RECRUITMENT & RETENTION SURVEY 2019 RESULTS

Out of School Care Workforce Statistics

SCOTTISH OUT OF SCHOOL CARE NETWORK

1. INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

From September to December 2019, in parallel with the annual OSC Workforce Survey SOSCN conducted a Retention and Recruitment Survey, the first time that we had done so. The survey was a response to the numerous anecdotal reports from around Scotland of out of school care services losing staff and the associated problems of recruiting- we wanted to better understand the common issues and find out how widespread they are.

Over recent years, services across Scotland have told us that, in the main, they have lost staff to early years jobs (a direct result of the expansion to provide 1140 funded hours of Early Learning and Childcare); jobs within schools and formal education (possibly roles that have been created through Pupil Equity Funding); or, jobs outwith the childcare sector. The common driving force is better pay and conditions, and more hours of employment.

Some services have also talked about having difficulties filling subsequent staff vacancies and the main reasons for this being: a general lack of applicants and an overall lack of candidates with the appropriate qualifications or experience for working in out of school care ie a complete insufficiency of individuals suited to working in childcare. The services have a sense that labour demand is currently outstripping the supply.

The results from this survey provide a snapshot of some of the issues which out of school care services are facing in terms of retaining and recruiting staff.

2. METHODOLOGY

A one-sided A4 page of 8 questions was created. The survey was made available for completion through distribution of paper-copies at SOSCN events and training sessions, as well as being directly mailed to all members. It was also available for completion online through a link at freeonlinesurveys.com

The following questions were asked:

1. How many staff members have left in the past 12 months?

2. In which local authority is your out of school care service based? (If your organisation covers several local authorities, please put the area where the MAJORITY of your services are located.)

3. Why did they leave? (Various options to choose from choose, including 'other'.)

4. If they got another job, what is it? (Various options to choose from including 'other.)

5. Why did they go the other job? (Various options to choose from including 'other.)

6. Have you had difficulty recruiting staff? (Yes/No)

7. On average how long has it taken to fill a vacant post? (Various options to choose from.)

8. What issues would you like to highlight about staff recruitment and retention in OSC?

3. RESULTS

NUMBER OF RESPONSES

A total of 116 completed responses to the survey were received which represents a total of 116 organisations. However, this number doesn't represent the overall number of services since several of these organisations operate multiple sites (from 2 to 10+ sites). Due to the limitations of the questions we are unable to ascertain the total number of services represented by this survey but it is likely to be between 130 and 150 services.

### 1. HOW MANY STAFF MEMBERS HAVE LEFT IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS?

Due to limitations of the questions asked we do not know the percentage of staff leaving either as a percentage of individual organisations or the overall workforce encompassed by the 116 organisations. Therefore, although we might presume that the higher staff losses are from large, and probably multiple site services, we cannot say with any certainty- it could be that some smaller services are facing high losses of staff which has a knock-on effect on their ability to provide a quality service or simply operate.

NOTE:

If we were to repeat the survey we would ask services to include overall staffing figures as well as numbers of staff lost. We would also ask if staffing losses are creating a detrimental effect on service provision.

The total number of staff leaving from the 116+ services represented in this survey is 372. However, as will be seen from subsequent questions not all these staff left for employment outwith the out of school care sector – some took other jobs within the sector, some left due to personal reasons, retiral, dismissal etc. and it would be natural to expect some workforce churn for these reasons. Our main point of interest in this survey and the workforce churn is the push and pull factors relating to vacancies in the workforce.

Chart 1: Number of staff lost in 12-month period

Number of staff lost in 12 month period
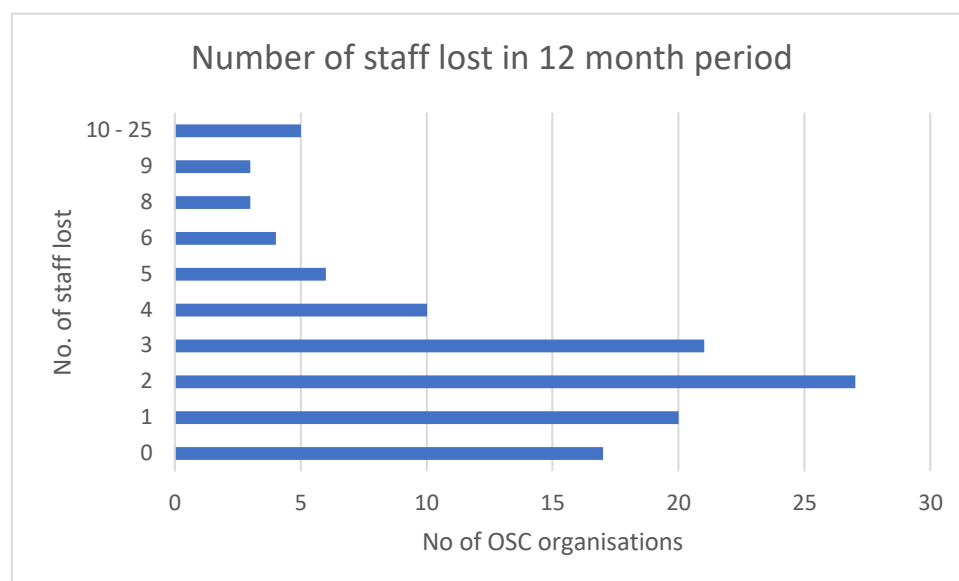
- 17 organisations reported not losing any staff

- 20 organisations reported losing one member of staff

- 27 organisations reported losing two members of staff

- 21 organisations reported losing three members of staff

- 10 organisations reported losing four members of staff

- 6 organisations reported losing five members of staff

- 4 organisations reported losing six members of staff

- 3 organisations reported losing eight members of staff

- 3 organisations reported losing nine members of staff

- 5 organisations reported losing between 10 and 25 members of staff

Of the 116 organisations represented, 15% (17 organisations) did not report any losses. This figure is only illustrative in relation to this survey – although all OSC organisations were encouraged to complete the survey it is more likely that services experiencing staff loss completed it. Therefore the assumption is that the results are more weighted in favour of services which experienced staff losses.

More than half the organisations (68) experienced losses of between 1 and 3 members of staff.

2. IN WHICH LOCAL AUTHORITY IS YOUR OUT OF SCHOOL CARE BASED?

Responses were received from 25 out of 32 local authorities- the largest percentage of responses (10%) came from Glasgow. Although the overall response to the survey was good, there was an insufficient number of responses from each local authority to be able to make any significant finding about staff retention or recruitment issues locally. The results will therefore be analysed in relation to the whole of Scotland.

3. WHY DID THEY LEAVE?

This question is trying to see if there were specific "push factors".

Chart 2: Why did they leave?
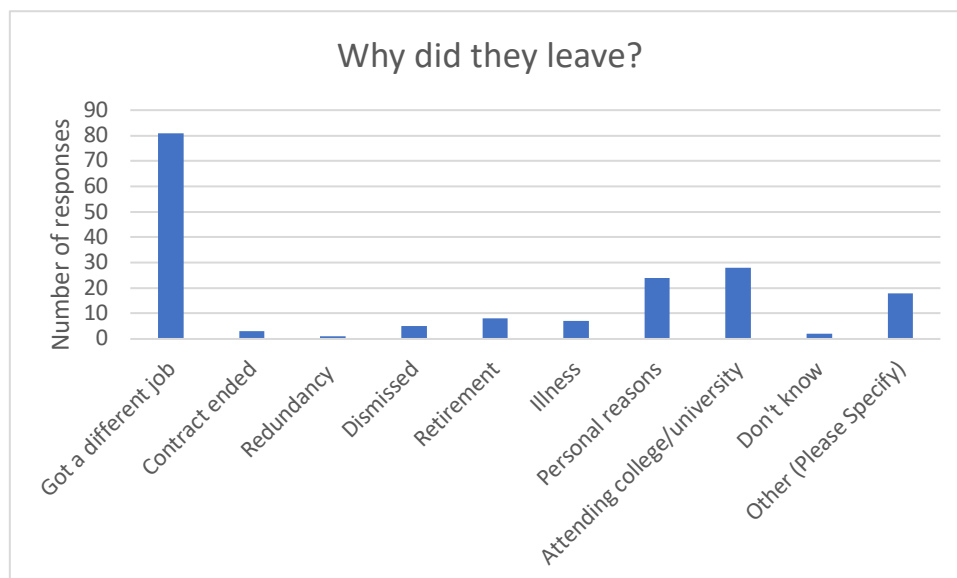
NB. The total number of responses to this question is higher than the overall number of survey responses as the reasons for staff leaving may be multiple for one organisation.

The most common reason for leaving (81 responses) was that the staff member got a different job, this was followed by leaving to attend college or university (28 responses) and then personal reasons (24 responses).

18 responses indicated that staff members left due to other reasons which included "moved away", "had a baby", "didn't want to study", "full time employment", and "didn't need the job".

4. IF THEY GOT ANOTHER JOB, WHAT IS IT?

Chart 3: If they got another job, what is it?
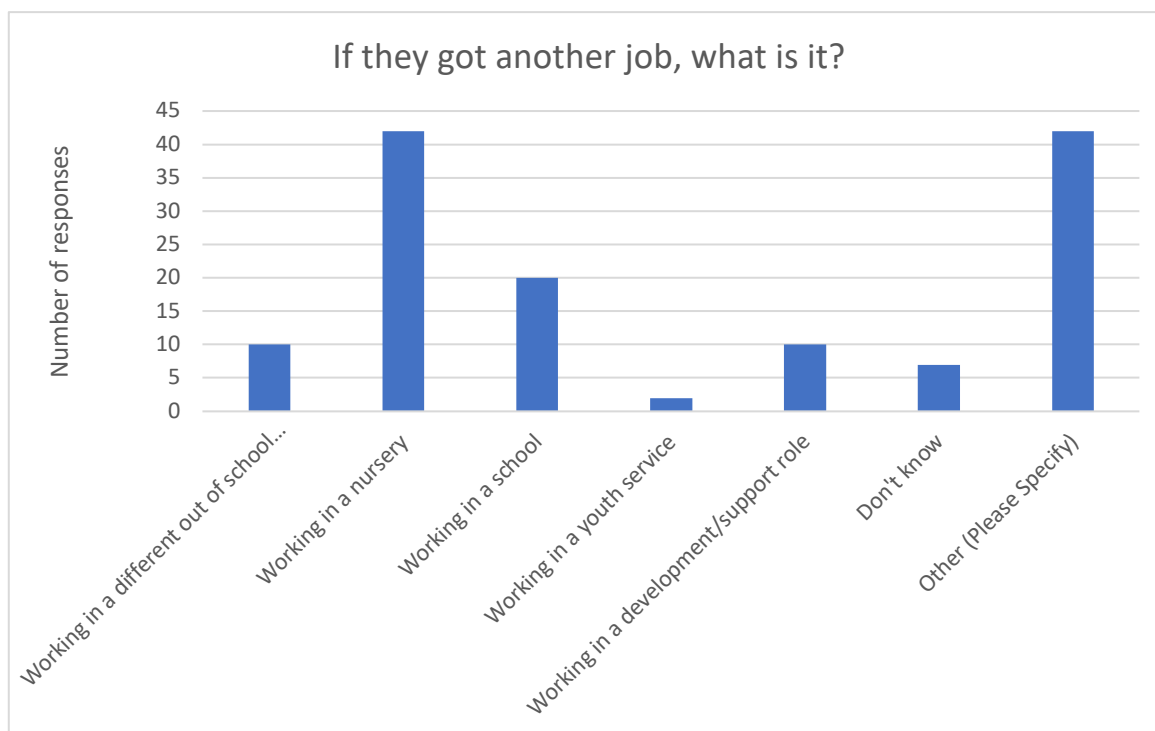
Of the 372 staff losses only 10 organisations said that staff took a job in another out of school care. The majority of staff members went to work in a nursery (42 responses), this was followed by working in a school (20 responses) and then working in a development/support role (10 responses).

42 responses said that staff went to work in another job not mentioned in the options.

Table 1: Other jobs staff members left for

Jobs	No. of responses
Unspecified job outwith childcare	11
Retail	4
Unspecified full-time childcare	3
Care Home	3
Teaching	2
Financial sector	2
Childminding	2
Fostering	1
Job within area of study	1
Office work	1
Dog groomer	1
Army	1

From the table we can see that the majority of staff members left the sector completely although a handful used their childcare skills either in a full-time childcare service, childminding, fostering or nannying.

5. WHY DID THEY GO TO THE OTHER JOB?

This question is trying to see if there were specific "pull factors".

Chart 4: Why did they go to the other job?
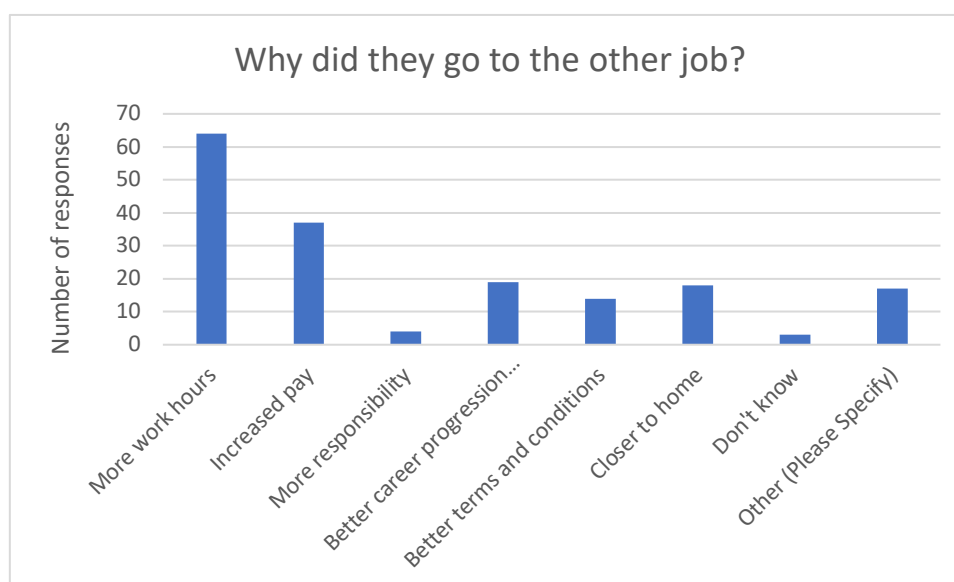
The most common responses were more work hours (64 responses) and increased pay (37 responses); these were followed by better career progression opportunities (19 responses), closer to home (18 responses), and better terms and conditions (14 responses).

15 responses indicated that staff were attracted to the other job for reasons other than those already indicated, which included: "university finished", "more flexibility", "better hours", "better for family life", "a term-time post", and "wanting a change."

6. HAVE YOU HAD DIFFICULTY RECRUITING STAFF?

Chart 5: Have you had difficulty recruiting staff?

Have you had difficulty recruiting new staff
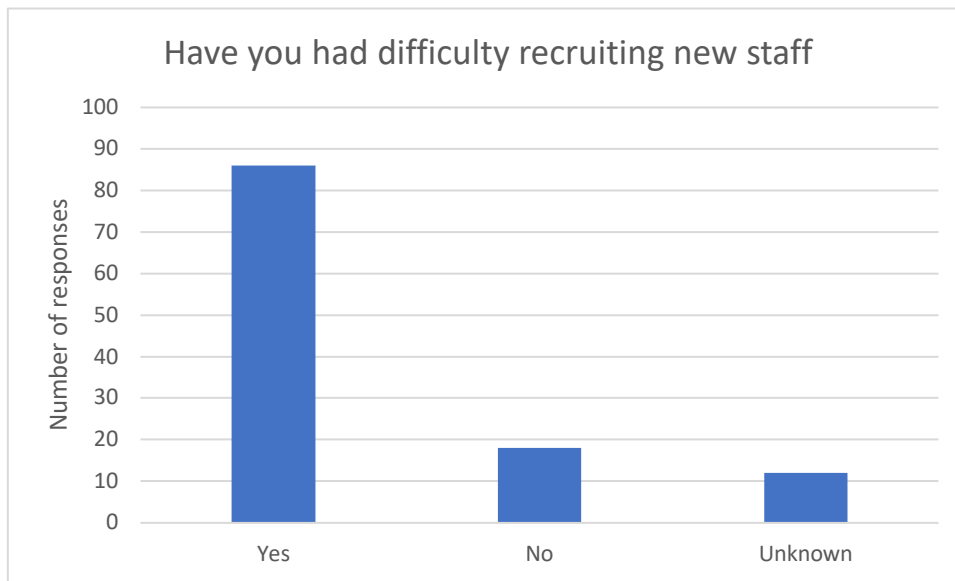
Three quarters of all who responded to the survey (86 responses) said that they have had difficulty recruiting staff.

7. ON AVERAGE HOW LONG HAS IT TAKEN TO FILL A VACANT POST?

Chart 6: On average how long has it taken to fill a vacant post?

On average, how long has it taken to fill a post?
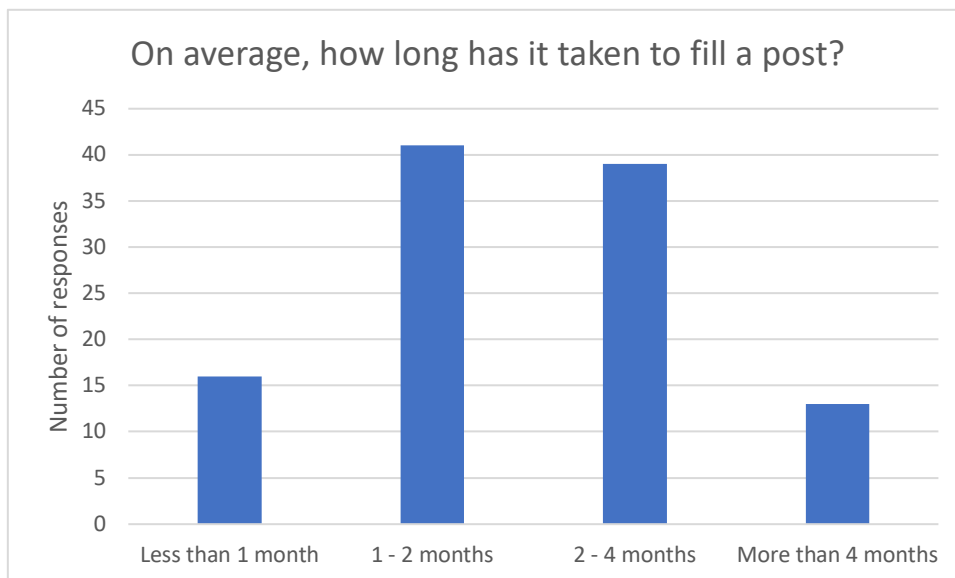
Only 16 organisations said that it had taken less than one month to fill a post. The most common answer was 1 -2 months (41 organisations), followed by 2 – 4 months (39 organisations). 13 organisations said that it had taken more than 4 months to recruit staff.

8. WHAT ISSUES WOULD YOU LIKE TO HIGHLIGHT ABOUT STAFF RETENTION AND RECRUITMENT?

In this question organisations were invited to highlight the issues which most affected the retention and recruitment of staff by identifying why people did not want to work in the sector and what the attraction was for working elsewhere, i.e. the push and pull factors.

Chart 7: Issues to highlight about staff retention and recruitment in OSC
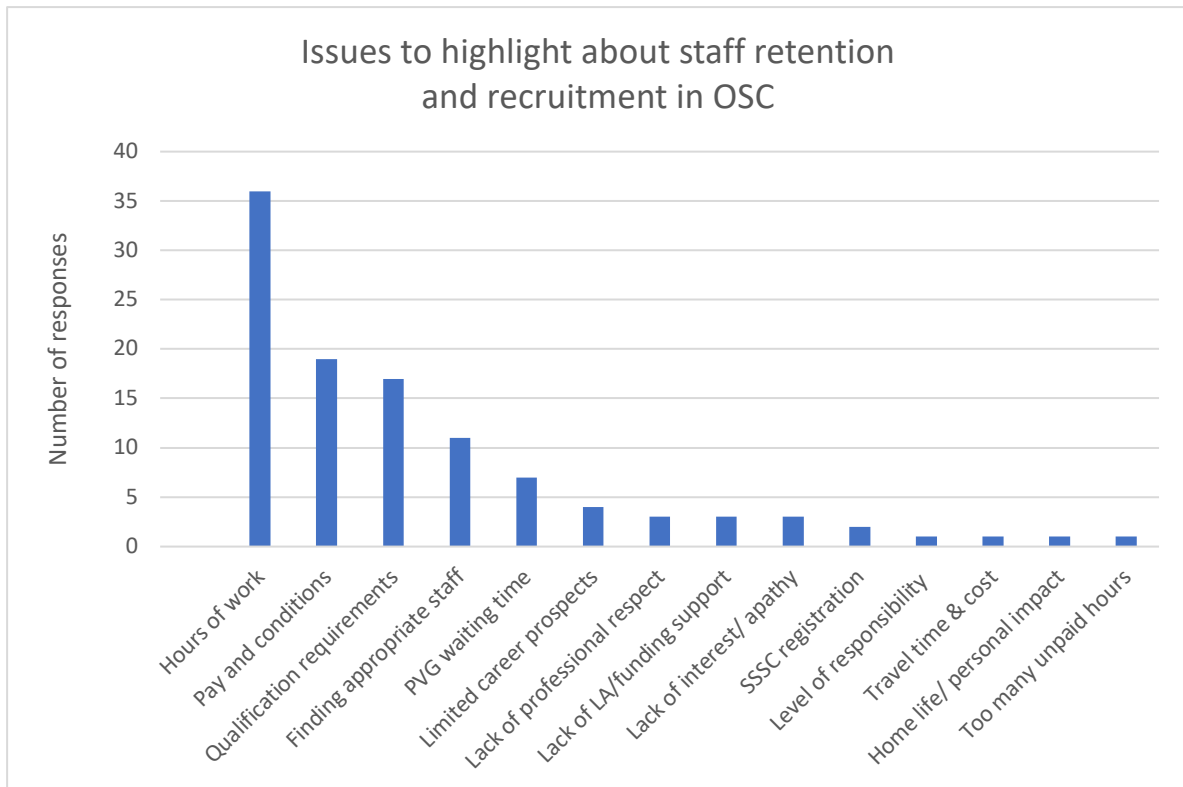
The most common response (36 responses) was about the hours of work relating to OSC- this included lack of hours available due to part-time nature of the job, split shifts and unsocial hours.

- "People were looking for more hours than we were offering."

- "I think it's split shifts and hours that really put candidates off."

- "Part-time contracts mean it's difficult to retain staff."

- "We are part time which means people need two jobs to make a decent wage."

- "Necessary qualification is same as working in a nursery. OSC cannot offer full time hours to match nursery."

- "Experienced and qualified staff do not want to work part time split shift patterns."

- "It is really difficult to get staff willing and able to work OSC hours – especially 3-6pm and we can't afford to pay enough to make it more attractive especially if staff are having to travel to get to work. Particularly an issue in rural areas."

This was followed by pay and conditions (19 responses) and the qualification requirements (17 responses).

- "Small services are not always able to offer the pay, terms and conditions that bigger services can."

- "Hours, rate of pay, qualification requirement are all main reasons for staff leaving/not applying for positions."

- "Hard to employ staff for split shift, most staff don't want to have to do an SVQ for a part-time job. Job very demanding for low pay."

- "Qualifications are both expensive and time-consuming – puts good staff off, particularly if they have other qualifications."

- "We have older staff who for whatever reason cannot fulfil an SVQ 2 (technology/learning). We will lose 2 morning staff at the end of the year because of this."

- "As much as I agree with staff being qualified or working towards a qualification, I think that this has put huge pressure on clubs to recruit and retain staff. Someone who works 15 hours a week is now having to study and also pay for all the qualification or part of the qualification. The hourly rate at the end of the qualification also does not match the qualification."

Finding appropriate staff and PVG waiting times were also highlighted as issues by a number of responses (11 and 7 respectively).

- "Lack of any appropriate staff."

- "Sometimes PVG scheme holds up staffing. Chasing up reference can hold up staffing."

- "Recruitment – salary, PVG timescales (people often have to look elsewhere if PVG takes 4 – 6 weeks, and it often does."

- "Long wait for PVG checks; lack of trained/qualified people applying for the posts; lack of good work ethics- people assume it's easy."

Other issues highlighted included: "limited career prospects", "lack of professional respect", "lack of local authority/funding support", "lack of interest/apathy", "SSSC registration", "level of responsibility", "travel time and cost", "home life and personal impact", and "too many unpaid hours".

OTHER SELECTED COMMENTS:

- "Hours are poor and so is the pay. We have to deliver an awful lot for the Care Inspectorate and this is not reflective for qualified staff. Staff would prefer to work in Tesco for more money and less headache!"

- "Until OSC places are funded by the Government we cannot compete with public sector vacancies. Something needs to be done where staff can be shared. There are simply not enough people to go around. Childcare for school-age children is suffering from the level of staff turn-over. Inconsistency in staff teams makes it difficult to work as a team and provide a quality service. Undue stress is put on the members of staff that are left when people leave and they have supply cover who don't know the children. This may be more manageable in larger services but is impossible with small clubs that just have 2 members of staff. Management time is taken up recruiting/juggling rotas or covering for

vacancies/absences. Most management posts are part-time and this then means other tasks/responsibilities slip. It effects the whole organisation and impacts on everyone's wellbeing. How are we supposed to retain staff when we don't have the time or resource to support them or recognise for them their great work because we are fire-fighting staffing issues/cover/recruitment/absences."

- "Retention is a massive area of issue: we cannot keep services to a high standard when we have to keep going back to square on with new staff every few months. The expansion of EYC should have included OSC; long-term children are going to need OSC services if the expansion leads to more parents going to work and we aren't going to be able to keep service running when we can't get staff."

- "At the moment we are really struggling to recruit qualified staff. We have even advertised for a Childcare Support Worker role with the view to training the staff and securing funding for them, however even that has proved problematic as the quality has been poor and we have also found that people are applying for the job, however they are not really interested in the role. They are just fulfilling their obligations regarding the jobcentre."

4. CONCLUSION

According to these findings, many out of school care services in Scotland are having significant problems retaining and recruiting staff. The majority of services find that it takes between 1 and 4 months to fill vacancies, which has a potentially detrimental effect on the quality of the service.

A number of 'push' factors were identified as reasons for people leaving out of school care, or not wanting to join the workforce: the work hours available (part-time employment mostly and split-shifts), low rates of pay and qualification requirements being the main ones.

Unsurprisingly, the 'pull' factors to other jobs mostly addressed the push factors i.e. more hours of work, better pay and conditions, no qualification requirements (or if staying in childcare, qualifications are recognised through better pay and conditions).

Whilst many staff were reported to have left the childcare sector and moved into retail, office work etc those that stayed tended to move into Early Years services as a direct result of more positions being available through the funded 1140 hours ELYC expansion programme.

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