

June 2021

“SUMMER OF PLAY 2021 FUNDING” QUICK SURVEY RESULTS

Following the announcement of the “Summer of Play” funding which was subsequently rebranded as “Get into Summer”, SOSCN undertook a short survey of school age childcare services to see if they have been able to access this funding through their local authority. Prior to the survey we had heard anecdotally from services that access to this funding was very varied across Scotland and these results have also been found from the survey responses.

The survey was accessed online via freeonlinesurveys.com. In total 86 responses were received from services based in 23 local authorities.

1. Has the council contacted you directly to support delivery of places and services as part of their ‘Summer of play’ programme?

| Response | Number | % |
|----------|--------|----|
| Yes | 11 | 13 |
| No | 72 | 84 |
| Unknown | 3 | 3 |

Services from 9 local authorities said that they had been directly contacted by their council.

We have also had conversations with some local authority development staff:

One local authority said that all out of school care providers were contacted to see if they would like to participate in ‘Get into Summer’ and have subsequently funded places for targeted children to attend school-age childcare over the summer.

In another local authority a steering committee was created from various council departments and local key stakeholders including the 3rd sector, and a grant programme was developed which was open to all school age childcare providers, as well as other local organisations.

2. Have you contacted the council about delivering places and services as part of the ‘Summer of Play’ programme?

| Response | Number | % |
|----------|--------|----|
| Yes | 27 | 31 |
| No | 57 | 66 |
| Unknown | 2 | 2 |

3. Is there a grant application in your local authority to deliver places and services as part of the 'Summer of Play'?

| Response | Number | % |
|------------|--------|----|
| Yes | 21 | 24 |
| No | 14 | 16 |
| Don't know | 50 | 59 |
| Unknown | 1 | 1 |

Services in 11 local authorities reported that there was a grant programme available locally. The 'no' responses were from 9 local authorities, and the 'don't know' responses were from 18 local authorities. Of the 'no' responses, 2 were from local authorities where some respondents said there was a grant programme. Of the 'don't know' responses 5 were from local authorities where some respondents said there was a grant programme.

4. If there is an application process, have you applied for funding? If yes, how much money have you applied for?

15 services said they had applied for grants ranging from £400 to £50,000. 2 services said they discovered they were ineligible to apply for the grant locally as they were private/commercial providers.

5. What have you applied to do with the funding?

- We are planning to expand the opportunities for children to be physically active through the investment in additional and new equipment. As we continue to be nervous about taking the children on the large trips we normally provide, we are using some of the funding to bring a wide range of experiences to the services. We are also going to do some intergenerational work with local care home providers focused around planting and growing as many of the local care homes are beginning to develop these spaces for the residents. Our children are going to focus on planting and growing a variety of plants which will be donated to the care homes so residents can look after them/plan them in their environment. We already provide a referral programme for children who are isolated, lack the opportunity to play etc. We will use the funding to expand the number experiences that are on offer to ensure they get a really good and fun summer holidays. This work includes our ASN services. The special schools locally have accessed funding to provide experiences for their families who do not attend our service, but we will link in with these experiences ensuring we maximise the money available.
- Hire 5 staff plus the cost of equipment, resources outing transport and food to deliver 7 weeks of summer play, fun and activities to children with ASN/Disabilities and or their siblings in partnership with the children's disability team of the local authority.
- 28 funded holiday club sessions and outdoor play resources to enhance all children's outdoor play opportunities.
- Wages for driver and hire of minibus, activities and entrance to attractions.

- Outings for ASN children.
- Support children from families who would not normally attend OSC though the summer and give them experiences and opportunities without it costing the families anything, supporting children's social and emotional wellbeing.
- Incorporate a free play and supper club from 4-6pm for local children to reduce food poverty and enhance social and play opportunities. Extra transport to increase capacity on our trip days and extra forest school sessions weekly for local children.
- Staff cover and family /children activities and outings.
- Trips as the plays scheme travel passes have not been given this year, outdoor equipment to replace after COVID.
- Food for children, two extra members of staff, resources to enhance play opportunity & bus fares to get to setting.
- Staffing, resources and food.
- Cover the costs of the spaces, food provision, activities for the vulnerable children, and any additional staff required to work fees.
- Run 9 days of activities for young people with multiple disabilities.

6. If you have applied to a grant programme, has your application been successful?

| Response | Number | % |
|-----------------------|--------|----|
| Yes | 8 | 32 |
| No | 7 | 28 |
| Still waiting to hear | 10 | 40 |

7. Is there anything else you want to tell us about the 'Summer of Play' in your local area?

The majority of services said that they had not received any information about "Summer of Play' (Get into Summer) or any information about potential funding. Some services also said they couldn't find any publicly available information about it on their council's website.

Below is a selection of comments highlighting different issues:

- I am part of the working group looking at how it is spent, there is a goal of spending the all of the money if possible, this means giving people cash towards transport which is a legitimate barrier for some families but there is no process for ensuring this is how it is spent every family will get money regardless of it they spend it on the children having fun. Voluntary sector can apply for a max of £10k however the Sports Development Community Trust will be handed £50+K to deliver free sports

activities and packed lunches. Meanwhile we are under real threat of closure once Furlough finishes and parents are still working from home.

- There were applications up to the total of £900,00 sent in for the budget of £250,000 they had, so they to turn away applicants of £650,00 from the Third sector. The local Youth council had the final decision as to what groups were awarded the grant.
- There was no offer to deliver services- we were asked to list activities which could be added to the online resource for parents and children which was unfortunately turned down by the reviewing team.
- Our out of school club has always put on a programme of play each summer encompassing new experiences and play opportunities. Local authority should have contacted us about the summer of play, as we are the only care service in the local authority that bases around play.
- There is no such thing in this area other than the leisure trust unregulated play. However, I operate another service only 10miles away that is a different council and this service is able to offer free play and supper sessions every day for 2hrs for local children. We are doing this as we asked local families who we have a good and long-lasting relationship with what they wanted/needed and this is what they asked for!! this means that children whose parents have lost jobs/furloughed or currently not engaging with us for a number of reasons can still come every day and maintain the relationships and support they have come to rely on. It is very sad the same can't happen 10 miles away.
- I was proactive in contacting the local authority and was put in touch with the person responsible for this who later got back to me with details, all good. Only problem is that we couldn't apply because we are a Limited Company not Not-for-Profit. It's a shame that our parents will miss out.
- I contacted Early Years Department at the council in May regarding this fund and how partnership working was crucial to our service continuing during the pandemic. I also highlighted the impact to our children and families that COVID has done, we are concerned for their mental health and well-being and have witnessed on a daily basis since reopening the changes in the children's behaviour. I also advised the council that we have provided 28 years' worth of Summer of Fun. I was advised that my email had been forwarded to the appropriate team who would be in touch.....still waiting.....and worrying for the future of OSC the "Forgotten Sector".
- It would appear the local authority decided arbitrarily who would be funded. They have confirmed there was no procurement process.

5. Are unregistered holiday services locally (council, leisure trust, private businesses etc) having an impact on your holiday services (select all which apply).

| Response | Number | % |
|---|--------|----|
| Yes, this happens every year. | 39 | 45 |
| Happening especially this year due to additional funding through 'Summer of Play' grants. | 20 | 23 |
| This is one of the main reasons we are providing a limited holiday service. | 14 | 16 |
| This is one of the main reasons we do not provide holiday service. | 6 | 7 |
| No | 25 | 29 |

Please add any comments about the impact of local unregistered holiday activity services:

Most of the comments were about the higher running costs, regulation requirements etc that registered childcare face compared to the unregulated activity services. This in turn means that unregistered services are able to offer holiday activities at a cheaper cost yet no-one is monitoring and ensuring the safety or quality of experience for the children attending these services. Below is a selection of comments from services:

- Having worked in the sector for over 20 years I have witnessed the steady decline of registered OSC, in particular holiday care. We have raised concerns previously with the local authority and were told that nothing could be done. It is frustrating considering how much training and learning OSC staff are asked to complete to provide high quality childcare and learning.
- We have increasingly found that other private unregulated holiday clubs compete with us. They don't have the same overheads, don't have qualified staff and work to much higher child to staff ratios. This has become more of a problem in recent years as they have been able to extend their hours and offer almost full day cover.
- It makes parents wonder why we are so expensive even though our holiday club runs at a loss every year. This year in particular we haven't been able to build up the reserves to cover the holiday club which will make things particularly difficult financially. Ideally, we would move to being a term-time only service but the hours covered by the unregistered summer clubs don't meet the needs of working parents. It feels like working parents are being penalised for working.
- What happened to them not being able to be open for more than 2hrs? I have a huge concern that throwing money at unregulated services will attract the wrong people to volunteer and if they have not been fit person checked as it has all been such a rush. Sporting activities are great fun but they are not for everyone and do not offer a care element to support children's mental health. When asked if the children we would provide care for could access the Sports Development Programme I was told tactfully that these sessions are not always the right place for

children who couldn't manage them - so there is no additional support for the children that should be being targeted.

- There is a lack of communication between unregistered services and registered services. Partnership working and joined up thinking could benefit both groups and more importantly the children and young people participating in these activities.
- These activity services would do much better, and our service, if worked together in terms of planning a programme. To offer variety without conflict for choices.
- We have only been affected slightly as the hours the council offered were limited.