

WORKFORCE

SURVEY

2022

RESULTS

Out of School Care
Workforce Statistics

SCOTTISH OUT OF SCHOOL CARE NETWORK

WORKFORCE SURVEY 2022 RESULTS

Out of School Care Workforce Statistics

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OVERVIEW

Introduction

The Scottish Out of School Care Network (SOSCN) has conducted an annual survey of the out of school childcare workforce in Scotland since 2008. All previous survey reports can be found at <https://soscn.org/policy/research>

Methodology

The survey was open for a two-month period from mid-November 2022 to mid-January 2023 and was publicised widely through membership e-mailings, SOSCN website and social media channels; in addition, all member services received hard copies of the survey. Individuals could also complete e-versions to be returned by email or completed online. The online survey was hosted on [freeonlinesurvey.com](https://www.freeonlinesurvey.com)

The results from any completed surveys received by email or post were entered into the online version.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF RESULTS

General Overview

There was a total of 240 responses, 7 of which were insufficiently completed to be used; this meant a total of 233 were analysed. 100 (43%) responses were completed by Lead Practitioners; 90 (39%) responses were completed by Practitioners and 43 (18%) by Support Workers. When comparing this year's response with the previous one, we can see that although numbers of responses are significantly down (from a total of 286), the % of responses for each job category are roughly the same.

Responses were received from OSC services located in 26 (out of 32) Scottish local authorities.

91% of respondents were female and 9% male.

58% of respondents worked in the voluntary sector; 28% in the private sector, and 14% in the public sector.

80% of respondents worked in services only providing out of school childcare (OSC) and 20% worked in combined ELC and OSC services.

78% of respondents said they saw working in OSC as a career; 10% said they didn't, and 12% were unsure.

45% of respondents said they were very satisfied working in OSC; 50% said they were fairly satisfied; 3% said they were not very satisfied, and 2% said they were dissatisfied.

In response to the question: Currently how stressed do you feel?

23% of respondents said they felt 'not at all stressed'; 51% said they felt 'slightly stressed'; 16% said they felt 'stressed'; 7% said they felt 'very stressed' and 4% said they were 'at breaking point'.

In response to the question: Currently how physically tired do you feel?

10% of respondents said they felt 'not at all tired'; 51% said they felt 'slightly tired'; 25% said they felt 'tired'; 11% said they felt 'exhausted', and 3% said they were 'at breaking point'.

In response to the question: Currently how would you rate your mental wellbeing?

14% of respondents said they felt 'great'; 43% said they felt 'good'; 32% said they felt 'OK'; 8% said they felt 'not very good', and 3% said they were 'at breaking point'.

OVERVIEW OF RESULTS BY JOB CATEGORY

Below are the main results, however we would encourage readers to read the whole report as there is in-depth information and quotes from individuals about their health and wellbeing, as well as their thoughts and experiences of undertaking registerable qualifications.

Lead Practitioner Overview

94% were female and 5% were male.

The average age was 46 years old, and ranged from 21 – 69 years old.

6% said they had a disability.

58% worked in the voluntary/3rd/charitable sectors; 31% in the private sector, and 10% in the public sector.

86% worked in services providing only OSC, and 11% worked in ELC & OSC combined services.

100% were registered with the SSSC.

83% saw working in OSC as a career; 10% didn't, and 7% were unsure.

52% were very satisfied in their job; 43% were 'fairly satisfied'; 2% were 'not very satisfied' and 3% was dissatisfied.

The average working week term time was 30 hours, and ranged from 10 – 47.5 hours. The average working week holiday time was 35 hours, and ranged from 5 – 50 hours.

The average salary was £14.05 per hour but ranged from £9.50 - £21.40 per hour.

The average number of years working in the sector was 15 but ranged from less than a year – 35 years.

When asked how stressed they currently feel, 10% said 'not at all'; 55% said 'slightly stressed'; 19% said 'stressed'; 9% said 'very stressed', and 6% were at 'breaking point'.

When asked how physically tired they feel, 4% said 'not at all'; 49% said 'slightly tired'; 26% said 'tired'; 15% said 'exhausted', and 4% said they were at 'breaking point'.

When asked how they would rate their mental wellbeing, 11% said 'great'; 45% said 'good'; 33% said 'OK'; 7% said 'not very good', and 4% said they were at 'breaking point'.

In general, for Lead Practitioners the best thing about working in OSC was the children which included seeing them develop and grow, and also their age- many preferred working with this older age group. Staff teams also scored highly as well as being able to support parents to work.

The main challenges identified by Lead Practitioners were staffing (recruitment and retention); poor pay; paperwork and bureaucracy; Care Inspectorate expectations; funding, and lack of professional recognition.

In terms of what needs to change in addition to better pay, less paperwork etc, Lead Practitioners said that having their own dedicated space/premises.

Practitioners Overview

92% were female, 7% were male and 1% preferred not to say.

The average age was 40 years old, and ranged from 16 – 66 years old.

7% said they had a disability.

54% worked in the voluntary/3rd/charitable sectors; 26% in the private sector, and 12% in the public sector.

72% worked in services providing only OSC, and 27% worked in ELC & OSC combined services.

96% were registered with the SSSC.

76% saw working in OSC as a career; 7% don't, and 13% were unsure.

37% were very satisfied in their job; 58% were 'fairly satisfied'; 3% were 'not very satisfied' and 1% were dissatisfied.

The average working week term time was 23 hours, and ranged from 5 – 40 hours. The average working week holiday time was 27 hours, and ranged from 4 – 40 hours.

The average salary was £10.69 per hour but ranged from £4.80 – £16 per hour.

The average number of years working in the sector was 7 but ranged from less than a year – 30 years.

When asked how stressed they currently feel, 32% said 'not at all'; 47% said 'slightly stressed'; 10% said 'stressed'; 4% said 'very stressed', and 4% were at 'breaking point'.

When asked how physically tired they feel, 17% said 'not at all'; 51% said 'slightly tired'; 21% said 'tired'; 7% said 'exhausted', and 4% said they were at 'breaking point'.

When asked how they would rate their mental wellbeing, 16% said 'great'; 47% said 'good'; 28% said 'OK'; 7% said 'not very good', and 4% said they were at 'breaking point'.

In general, for Practitioners the best thing about working in OSC was the children, which included building relationships with them, and seeing them develop and grow. Practitioners also liked the fun environment and how every day was different. For a small number the work hours suited them.

The biggest challenges in OSC as identified by Practitioners were: children's behaviour and engaging older children; supporting children with ASN and disabilities; paperwork; pay, conditions and hours of work; lack of space and shared premises; staffing issues, and for a small number, unsupportive or uncooperative parents.

In terms of what Practitioners said they would like to see change, they mentioned: better pay; less paperwork; own space/premises; more holidays; more funding, and better links with other professionals and better professional recognition. A few said that they would change nothing.

Support Workers Overview

79% were female and 21% were male.

The average age was 38 years old, and ranged from 17 – 62 years old.

5% said they had a disability.

42% worked in the voluntary/3rd/charitable sectors; 19% in the private sector, and 21% in the public.

74% worked in services providing only OSC, and 26% worked in ELC & OSC combined services.

93% were registered with the SSSC.

60% saw working in OSC as a career; 12% didn't, and 28% were unsure.

51% were very satisfied in their job; 47% were 'fairly satisfied'; 2% were 'not very satisfied' and none was dissatisfied.

The average working week term time was 19 hours, and ranged from 3 – 47.5 hours. The average working week holiday time was 22 hours, and ranged from 3 - 45 hours.

The average salary was £9.98 per hour but ranged from £5.63 – £12.27 per hour.

The average number of years working in the sector was 3 but ranged from less than a year – 22 years.

When asked how stressed they currently feel, 30% said 'not at all'; 47% said 'slightly stressed'; 19% said 'stressed'; 5% said 'very stressed', and none were at 'breaking point'.

When asked how physically tired they feel, 9% said 'not at all'; 51% said 'slightly tired'; 30% said 'tired'; 9% said 'exhausted', and none said they were at 'breaking point'.

When asked how they would rate their mental wellbeing, 16% said 'great'; 30% said 'good'; 40% said 'OK'; 14% said 'not very good', and none said they were at 'breaking point'.

In general, for Support Workers the best thing about working in OSC was the children.

The biggest challenges in OSC as identified by Support Workers were: children's behaviour; meeting the needs of children; paperwork, and part-time hours.

In terms of what they would like to see change, Support Workers said: less paperwork; better pay, and their own space. A few said that nothing needs to change.

LEAD PRACTITIONER- RESULTS IN FULL

100 responses

GENDER

Female: 94 (94%)

Male: 5 (5%)

Unknown: 1 (1%)

AGE

Age range: 21– 69

Median age: 47

Average age: 46

DISABILITY

Yes: 6 (6%)

No: 92 (92%)

Prefer not to say: 1 (1%)

Unknown: 1 (1%)

ETHNICITY

White Scottish/English/Welsh/Northern Irish: 95 (95%)

White other: 1 (1%)

White Irish: 1 (1%)

Other: Greek 1 (1%)

Prefer not to say: 2 (2%)

SECTOR

Voluntary/3rd/Charitable: 58 (58%)

Private: 31 (31%)

Public: 10 (10%)

Don't know: 1 (1%)

SERVICE

Only OSC: 86 (86%)

Combine ELC & OSC: 11 (11%)

Unknown: 3 (3%)

REGISTRATION

SSSC: 100 (100%)

Do you see working in OSC as a career?

Yes: 83 (83%)

No: 10 (10%)

Unsure: 7 (7%)

How satisfied are you in your job?

Very: 52 (52%)

Fairly: 43 (43%)

Not very: 2 (2%)

Dissatisfied: 3 (3%)

Hours term-time per week

Range: 10 – 47.5

Median: 30

Average: 30

Hours holiday-time per week

Range: 5 – 50

Median: 34

Average: 35 hours

SALARY PER HOUR

Range: £9.50 – £21.40

Median: £17.93

Average: £14.05

YEARS WORKING IN THE SECTOR

Range: Less than a year – 35 years

Median: 13 years

Average: 15 years

WELLBEING Currently how stressed do you feel?

Not at all stressed: 10 (10%)

Slightly stressed: 55 (55%)

Stressed: 19 (19%)

Very stressed: 9 (9%)

At breaking point: 6 (6%)

Unknown: 1

WELLBEING Currently how physically tired do you feel?

Not at all tired: 4 (4%)

Slightly tired: 49 (49%)

Tired: 26 (26%)

Exhausted: 15 (15%)

At breaking point: 4 (4%)

Unknown: 2 (2%)

WELLBEING Currently how would you rate your mental wellbeing?

Great: 11 (11%)

Good: 45 (45%)

OK: 33 (33%)

Not very good: 7 (7%)

At breaking point: 4 (4%)

WELLBEING Would you like to provide any further information about the answers you have just provided? (All answers will be treated in confidence and anonymised in final result, if used.)

Not all respondents completed this section. There was not one main overwhelming issue but a number which recurred throughout responses and these included: staffing issues (staff shortages and recruitment issues); financial difficulties; paperwork; underpaid staff, and unreal expectations in terms of regulations.

“External work pressures - constantly changing legislation hard to keep on top of, lack of staff, lack of staff with competencies or interest to develop professionally, SSSC qualification expectations far outweigh the scope of the job or abilities of Lead Practitioners, wages in sector poor, support from Care Inspectorate poor.”

“Last 2 years have taken their toll. I would hope to start lessening my hours and spending more time on me and my family.”

“I have to a lot of stuff for work at home and I'm also doing my Level 8 at college so I feel overwhelmed with the volume of stuff that needs done.”

“Work is stress is mainly with the running of the business to ensure that the service survives. Since COVID we have had a significant drop in numbers which has an impact in our finance. Our financial security that we had before COVID has gone. More staff were needed to meet COVID guidelines with children in smaller groups/bubbles needing more staff, extra costs of PPE, wages and cleaning. This along with less children attending had a detrimental impact on our finances.”

“Although my hours are only 18, as most staff reduced hours last year to help with the financial costs of the service, salaried staff all work more hours than they are paid for. This is voluntary as we are all invested and care deeply about the service and our families.”

“Proud of how our service is developing but it takes so much personal sacrifice of time, even to keep up with basics.”

“I worry about my work a lot - not so much the future - as I am a bit of an optimist but more about our current situation. In the last couple of years several long term, well qualified and very experienced playworkers have left our organisation. We have not been able to replace them with permanent staff with the right skills. Most recently we lost the assistant manager. We are relying more now on students who can offer a few days here and there. Many skills have now been lost. I worry about keeping the staff we have currently. A lot more of my time is spent on supervising new staff. Several children have left in the past few months and our income has dropped. I cannot envisage taking holidays this year as there are no staff I could entrust to deputise for me in my absence. I have sent out scores of application forms to potential candidates for our vacant positions but they do not return them.”

“As a manager who takes care of all aspects of OSC, I'm finding it increasingly difficult to ensure all tasks are 'above board'. Staff feel underpaid and undervalued and I already work many hours unpaid each week. I'm a counted staff member for ratios so all manager work completed in my own time. Our charity run group can't afford to pay Council high rent unless we raise fees in which parents are already struggling. Such a happy, busy and wonderful club that doesn't gain the credit.”

“Cannot get Playworkers, this is having a detrimental effect on our numbers as we have waiting lists now in all my services. The stress that the Care Inspectorate will be out and I'm on the floor 3 days per week. We have a lot of children wanting to attend but I cannot get the staff. I am stressed at home as you

cannot leave this behind you at work. As a manager, the stress is mega and you worry at home, cannot sleep at night as you still have the workers that rely on you to pay wages etc."

"The cost of living is causing me some concern over how i am going to be able to continue to do my job as it costs me a fortune to get to my place of work in petrol and the buses are not reliable enough to use them for early morning starts and late nights home."

"Stressful when trying to juggle lack of funding and parents struggling to pay bills but still needing to use service and not much support from local council."

"Work in general is fine, however, at this time of year we see a high rise in staff absences which we can at times struggle to cover. We have also recently had an inspection that was not very well planned out (by the inspector), was very rushed and she was very demanding (she did not consider the needs of our business only her own inspection which did not work. She kept staff back an hour after working hours, school weren't happy at not being able to close up and management then had to go on a call at 7pm at night with her due to her own holidays the following days). The feedback was fine, however the process was very stressful for management and our staff team. That's been 2 inspections this year we have been unhappy with the process. Due to these, stress levels are higher at the moment."

"The stress within the sector is not getting better after the pandemic. There is unrealistic expectations from the Scottish Government and the Care Inspectorate. There is policy that does not take into account play and there is too much focus on early years, guidance is ambiguous differing view depending on inspector, this needs to be addressed. The impact of stresses due to lack of support, understanding of 3rd sector is having impact on wellbeing of all the sector."

In general, what is the best thing about working in OSC?

The vast majority of respondents talked about working with children: seeing them grow and develop, building relationships with the children and their families, seeing happy children having fun. Many respondents emphasised they enjoyed working with school-age children as opposed to other age groups.

Some respondents additionally mentioned they enjoyed working with their colleagues and parents, and enabling parents to access work or training.

A small number of respondents said that the hours suited them.

Below is a selection of comments from respondents:

"I love the children and watching them achieve and grow. I enjoy the interaction with my families and supporting them."

"The families we work with. I honestly love my job and am extremely lucky to be working in an amazing team and feel fully supported. Building relationships with the children and families, working closely with them to ensure they are getting the best care, support and outcomes."

"The children. They are so diverse and make me laugh and smile every day."

"The children!!! I love seeing the direct impact we have such as growing children's confidence, new skills and quality time spent with our next generation."

“The children. Watching them grow and mature is great. Now the children who I looked after 23 years ago, have their own children now and attend the same school. It's just fab.”

“The kids. Without a doubt. They are the reason we continue to push for quality improvement every day.”

“The children there amazing, my favourite thing is when they come into the setting and can't wait to tell us how there day has been. I have a great team who work well together, children and parents are happy.”

“The children. Being able to care for, nurture , teach them new skills and the fact that when they leave OSC some come back and work with us as sessional staff members at 16, or come in to undertake their Duke of Edinburgh Award with us.”

In general, what is the biggest challenge about working in OSC?

The biggest challenges were fairly common: bureaucracy and legislation; staffing issues; lack of professional recognition and status; lack of additional funding or support; training and qualification requirements; issues with premises, and Care Inspectorate expectations were all identified as ongoing challenges.

Below is a selection of comments from respondents:

“Government acknowledgement and support for the services we provide. With are non-statutory care provisions (for the most part, part time), based predominantly within school buildings where we have to accept limited space to enable us to provide our care, store resources (which is freely available to ELC (nursery stage) who have designated space they do not have to pull out/put away up to twice a day, yet when inspected are expected to have the same level of resources, access to areas as embedded provisions that are statutory. When children are having problems at school, we are not approached/consulted, nor considered worth approaching for our experiences of the child when in our care (GIRFEC). No individual recognition for the valuable services we provide, and the poor relation to ELC and insulted to feel as though we are being 'slotted in' with ELC by adding 'school aged children'. We already meet the same level of provision as ELC, my setting currently graded 5&6 for Care Inspectorate, but the overwhelming feeling of being undervalued, under supported over looked by the government for what is needed for the OSC provisions. For me, this is not going to change by being 'slotted in' with ELC and School aged children, nor is HAVING to undertake a degree to continue to provide the high level of service myself and my team do. Government and sector bodies need to listen directly to OSC providers, people this is affecting directly. I get questionnaires all the time but just don't have the time to complete them, let alone believe that any credence be given to my views/opinions. Having worked in the childcare sector for nearly 30 years, setting up my private OSC setting, attaining grade 6 across the board and at present 5&6's, I don't believe that undertaking a degree at this stage in my life holds any value. It will certainly continue to take me away from my family as I love what I do and do not intend to move into any other childcare related sector. We deserve to have our own sector that does not require such a high level of qualification to enable us to provide a service. So in the near future, when I have not met the qualification condition requirements for my role, I will have to de-register and appoint a manger that is willing to meet the qualification criteria, putting further financial burden on the setting and increasing costs for families. The expectation on qualification at my level is, in my opinion un-necessary.”

“Small organisation- not run for profit- near impossible to keep up with Care Inspectorate expectations and run a business/maintain staff/keep focus on children.”

“The paperwork is a really big challenge. Most of our children are only in for an hour or two, we want to spend as much time as we can providing them with fun but can be taken over by paperwork. Staffing is

another HUGE challenge. They need to have a qualification relating to childcare, yet it isn't really a career you can pursue, reason being, it's out of school hours and there is only so many you can do a week."

"Being recognised within all sectors as OSC is a vital service for each child and young person's development and progression."

"Being accepted as professionals, I have just finished 6 years of studying that I had to complete to be able to continue in my job role. I am just seen as a babysitter. We are not included in any discussions with other professionals on the needs of any child."

"No Support! We are not recognised as Qualified Staff, and although we are registered with the Care Inspectorate we are classed as Daycare Of Children which emphasises Education, which we are not. We are losing our identity of PLAY. Out of school care was set up as a safe warm and nurturing place for the children to attend at the end of their school day until such times as their parent/carer finished their working day."

If you could change one thing about working in OSC, what would it be?

A number of main issues were identified from the responses: more hours; better pay; own premises; less paperwork, and better professional recognition and status (and to be valued more). (This was little changed from the previous year.)

Below are a selection comments from respondents:

"Better communication and inclusion in the government decisions and more transparency where OSC is concerned."

"Perhaps funded hours from the government would help push up numbers of children attending across the sector, and save many services who have had huge knocks by the working from home trend. Though would we then face the trouble facing nurseries, where the funding received doesn't actually cover the cost of caring for the child? The Out of School Care Framework being continued would also help. The amount of times I hear 'oh but you don't even do curriculum'. Yes the framework wouldn't be curriculum as such, but I feel that it would be a step to improving the professional recognition our sector deserves."

"The pay, as I believe we wouldn't lose any many staff that leave simply because they cannot afford to work with us anymore."

"Other people's views of it's 'just being a club'. We are a high quality out of school care service who offer children so many opportunities, and support our families to no end but it is never noticed as it's "just a club"."

"I don't feel we are valued enough in our role. We are underpaid and not included in multi-agency working such as TAC meetings."

QUALIFICATIONS

61% of the Lead Practitioners were already qualified to the appropriate level for registration with the SSSC (BA Childhood Practice 29%; PDA Childhood Practice 25%; BA (Hons) Childhood Practice 3%; Pg Diploma Childhood Practice 2%; MEd Childhood Practice 1%, and Graduate Diploma Childhood practice 1%). 20% were currently undertaking the appropriate qualification (BA Childhood Practice 11%; PDA Childhood practice 8%, and BA (Hons) 1%).

QUALIFICATIONS What impact has the learning from the required qualification (completed or underway) had/is having on your practice?

Responses to this question were mixed. Some respondents said that undertaking the qualification has had a positive impact on their practice- it has given them more skills; boosted self-confidence; enabled them to be better managers and support staff; improved their practice; increased their professionalisation, and they have a greater knowledge about child behaviours and development.

Other respondents however said they did not find the qualification a positive experience and felt that it was a 'tick box' exercise to keep their job. Some commented that the qualification contents were not relevant for school age childcare and too early years focussed, and that it was very time consuming at the expense of work and family life.

Below is a selection of comments from respondents:

"Consolidated knowledge and made me realise how much I did and how significant my role was."

"Putting more pressure on my work life - time pressure, worries, struggle to focus."

"The BA consolidated what I already knew from 15 years of working as a manager. That sounds pompous but what I mean is that it didn't teach me anything new but it did give me more confidence to practice."

"I started the last 2 semesters of the BA CHILDHOOD PRACTICE. However, with staff shortages and work piling up I had to withdraw as I had no time to complete the work let alone get to grips with a completely new online system. If I do not gain the final 60 credits at SCQF level 9 then I will not be able to continue as Manager (even though I will have worked as manager and shown competence for 5 years in 2024!)"

"Struggling [for the qualification] to have any impact post-COVID as having to be included in staff ratio due to lack of staff. No time to put knowledge into practice."

"Completing the BA in Childhood practice helped my confidence in my role. It supported my own learning in my role, my experiences and grew my knowledge of children's development particularly older children. The reading and knowledge underpinned what I already knew and allowed me to look deeper into areas that interested me. In particular understanding the impact of trauma on children. Being able to support children using my knowledge and experience is essential in my role."

"A lot of added stress for a job that is 3 hours a day."

"Totally changed the way I think, and I now teach the award."

"I am now leaving this sector and going to another job. I did not want to return to university. I believe a management course in any field, is pretty much the same. So why it has to be a childcare management course? I do not understand."

"I am due to undergo a BA in Childhood Practice as part of my SSSC but to be honest as my role as a Manager I don't see why my current qualifications are not enough. This is because from my point of view as a manager I require leadership and management training, I also require to be able to look at how we can promote the business with some entrepreneur skills which is not given in the BA Childhood Practice. We are an out of school club, we should not be teaching the children anything we are there for them to have fun and I feel the Level 7 qualification is enough for this."

“Helped me deliver the service in a more professional manner. Confidence to stand up for our profession and knowledge is power.”

QUALIFICATIONS Is there anything missing from the qualification which you think would be beneficial to know?

Although some said that ‘nothing’ was missing from the qualifications, others said it was too theoretical and there needed to be more of a focus on practice, and school-age children; and that they would like to see content around running a business. They would also like content around supporting children with ASN and disabilities.

Below is a selection of comments from respondents:

“Hopefully the course now includes much more about play. 6 years ago there was little academic research available about play but that has changed and it should now be easier to include.”

“Why is it not tailored towards non-ELC? Through my own experience and that of my staff, I’ve seen how when selecting study modules for level 7, assessors actively guide you towards the units that they are familiar with but are not relevant to our setting.”

“The PDA and also BA in Childhood Practice should have more interest in the older child ie of primary school age rather than concentrating on the 0-3 curriculum.”

QUALIFICATIONS Through your completion or current undertaking of a qualification, and aside from any professional development, has the qualification had any impact (positive/negative) on your personal life/development?

Responses were very varied- some were positive in terms of personal achievement and building confidence, others however highlighted how it severely impacted on family and personal life.

Below is a selection of comments from respondents:

“The completed qualification had a positive impact on my development. The Lead Practitioner qualification is too challenging, costly and not relevant enough to my role. It has placed a significant additional burden on my personal life when I already work full time and have a family. If I don't complete this qualification I can't stay in my job, a job I have been doing for years.”

“At the time I had no choice but to do the course and I resented that as it impacted hugely on my home life. Studying began at 10pm until 2am or later when a hand in deadline was looming. All very tiring.”

“Trying to find the time to undertake this SVQ, pandemic aside, has had an impact on my mental health and time to spend with my family. I have missed out on family holidays, weekend trips away and the stress of knowing it has to be completed is with me all the time. I am now on my 3rd year undertaking this and I do prioritise the level of care I provide over this qualification as it is more important to me than a piece of paper to validate I can do my job. I don't believe that undertaking a degree at this stage in my life holds any value. It will certainly continue have a negative impact on my mental health and further missing out/time away from family. The grid of qualifications above denotes different qualifications for ELC and OSC - they should not be under one umbrella and more emphasis put on nurture in OSC.”

“Negative is the time out of family life as it was a distance learning course but this was expected and worth it to complete the course. The positives are my confidence in my role in my knowledge and sharing

this with others. But it has also encouraged me to continue in my own learning and reading, encouraging other staff in their learning too."

"Just takes time away from family time as I often had to study late at night once everyone had stopped using the internet!!"

"Yes I am able to reflect both in and on practice and understand I need to be able to be different things for different people adapting my style and person centred this has come from learning and reflecting on my own impact."

"Yes - I really struggled to fit it into my life. I worked full time, had a child to get through school and university, used to sit up late at night doing my qualification and it did take me longer than expected to complete it. I'm happy I have it but I wouldn't do the BA now at my stage in life."

"I am very proud to have achieved my degree and it has made me a more confident leader."

"Helped me get other job in different sector."

"Having completed the qualification i know i am more confident in my role."

"Yes, it has enhanced my personal life, it opened my eyes to what i can achieve with the support of my work and university. I now have a thirst for research into play and training. Very positive impact."

"Created professional networks. opened up various opportunities to engage in events/training specific to my areas of interest. It has built my confidence."

"I feel happy I have accomplished completing my degree but feel out of school care is a more practical job, being good at writing essays does not mean you are good at your job."

QUALIFICATIONS Do you have other qualifications which are not currently acceptable for registration as a worker in out of school care but you think should be? If so what is it/what are they, and why do you think they should be accepted?

Below is a selection of comments and suggestions from respondents:

"SVQ4 for Lead Practitioners is a sufficient qualification level when balanced against the actual job, wage and progression opportunities."

"I have a BA Hons degree in Childhood and Youth Studies from the Open University. This isn't accepted by the SSSC but I found it valuable. I had to complete an SVQ3 (level 7) when my degree is Level 10."

"As a manager I feel that my BA (Hons) Management should be enough along with my SVQ 7 as managers need leadership, marketing and accounts background as well."

"Yes, I have an honours degree in design. This has allowed me to teach on behalf of councils, NHS and in FE colleges. All experience and degrees count for nothing. Without this I wouldn't have the experience I needed to do my job or the creativity to develop/improve our service. Very frustrating and polarised point of view."

"Yoga teacher."

“BA Educational Studies - this gave me credits to only do the final year for the BA Childhood Practice but having the SVQ 4, I did not agree with also having to do the additional degree. It gave me little extra insight to what I already knew and a lot overlapped the previous BA or it had areas that had also been of relevance as it focused a lot on children, philosophy etc and not only education.”

“BA hons community education, I believe should allow you to be a lead practitioner.”

“Forest school training and woodland leader training.”

“British Sign Language”

“BA Businesses and Management.”

PRACTITIONER RESULTS IN FULL

90 responses*

(*Due to the number of responses being less than 100, the percentages attached are only an indicative figure- greater accuracy requires 100 responses or more.)

GENDER

Female: 83 (92%)

Male: 6 (7%)

Prefer not to say: 1 (1%)

AGE

Age range: 16 – 66

Median age: 40

Average age: 40

DISABILITY

Yes: 6 (7%)

No: 81 (90%)

Prefer not to say: 2 (2%)

Unknown: 1 (1%)

ETHNICITY

White Scottish/English/Welsh/Northern Irish: 82 (91%)

White other: 3 (3%)

Asian/Asian UK-Pakistani: 1 (1%)

Scottish: 1 (1%)

Scottish- Shetland: 1 (1%)

Unknown: 2 (2%)

SECTOR

Voluntary/3rd/Charitable: 50 (54%)

Private: 23 (26%)

Public: 11 (12%)

Don't know: 5 (6%)

Unknown: 1 (1%)

SERVICE

Only OSC: 65 (72%)

Combined ELC & OSC: 24 (27%)

Unknown: 1 (1%)

REGISTRATION

SSSC: 86 (96%)

Unknown: 4 (4%)

Do you see working in OSC as a career?

Yes: 68 (76%)

No: 7 (7%)

Unsure: 12 (13%)

Unknown: 3 (3%)

How satisfied are you in your job?

Very: 33 (37%)

Fairly: 52 (58%)

Not very: 3 (3%)

Dissatisfied: 1(1%)

Unknown: 1 (1%)

Hours term-time per week

Range: 5 – 40 hours

Median: 21 hours

Average: 23 hours

Hours holiday-time per week

Range: 4 – 40 hours

Median: 27.5 hours

Average: 27 hours

SALARY PER HOUR

Range: £4.80 – £16

Median: £10.50

Average: £10.69

YEARS WORKING IN THE SECTOR

Range: Less than a year – 30 years

Median: 10 years

Average: 7 years

WELLBEING Currently how stressed do you feel?

Not at all stressed: 29 (32%)

Slightly stressed: 42 (47%)

Stressed: 9 (10%)

Very stressed: 4 (4%)

At breaking point: 4 (4%)

Unknown: 2 (2%)

WELLBEING Currently how physically tired do you feel?

Not at all tired: 15 (17%)

Slightly tired: 46 (51%)

Tired: 19 (21%)

Exhausted: 6 (7%)

At breaking point: 4 (4%)

WELLBEING Currently how would you rate your mental wellbeing?

Great: 14 (16%)

Good: 42 (47%)

OK: 25 (28%)

Not very good: 6 (7%)

At breaking point: 4 (4%)

WELLBEING Would you like to provide any further information about the answers you have just provided? (All answers will be treated in confidence and anonymised in final results, if used.)

Below is a selection of the comments:

“Practitioners need to be treated with more respect and compassion, the job itself is very rewarding but it is also very draining and stressful, we are responsible for the care and wellbeing of children from ages as young as a few month to preschool. Practitioners should be paid the same as teachers as we also have to put in the time and effort to gain qualifications and put in that extra effort when caring for the child in our facilities.”

“I am carrying out my BA HONS in Childhood Practice at the University of Highland and Islands, whilst working in OSC and sometimes I feel like working full time in a private or local authority nursery would better support this however due to other commitments OSC hours fit better.”

“I get there is a shortage of ELC practitioners but it’s not fair on the practitioners that are within the settling to have all the stress out on them. 10+ key children to get observations on, reports done every 3 months, care plans every 3 months, as well as bringing in ASN children and the staff not given enough training on this...more support throughout the ASN side of things would be beneficial for all staff and other children.”

“Stress is mainly from work in that OSC never has any relief staff; this impacts on core staff trying to take holidays. Holidays improve staff’s mental health and wellbeing.”

"I love my job in out of school care, I also work in the school as an SFLA Advanced with children with additional needs so for me it's a great way to work inclusively with both Neuro typical and Neuro diverse children every day. I find them both so rewarding."

"I see other people balancing working in the school being overwhelmed and exhausted but feeling they can't leave other job due to financial reasons/hours as well as OSC."

In general, what is the best thing about working in OSC?

Overwhelmingly the most common answer was in relation to working with children; this also included seeing them having fun, playing, developing and learning. Some respondents also specified that they enjoyed working with primary-age children rather than younger ones.

Some respondents specifically mentioned that the job was fun, and no day was the same.

A small number of respondents also indicated that the part-time hours suited their family life and other additional caring responsibilities.

Below is a selection of the comments:

"Providing play and learning experiences to the children in a nurturing environment."

"Working with the children and seeing them grow and how OSC enables children to develop skills which they are interested in."

"Being able to teach the children something new. Seeing the children's faces when they have achieved something new. Seeing the children grow and develop."

"Interacting with the children; responses & development you get back from children, and knowing you've supported & made a difference in children's play experiences."

"Spending time with the children and generally having a laugh with them while they are relaxing and winding down after school. It's great when they want my help to do things or play with them and I love being involved in everything but when they are just chatting to me about their day, problems or any upcoming events I feel like a part of their world. Also their laughter and excitement is infectious!"

"It's an extremely rewarding job, the children give me the motivation to provide the best care for them and to work hard to earn my qualifications."

"Being a good role model for children and helping them become confident individuals while getting the most out of there play experiences."

"I like working with the variety of ages within the group, the children are all different, wouldn't normally mix but get on reasonably well and fun to be with."

In general, what is the biggest challenge about working in OSC?

The biggest challenge identified was children's behaviour. In addition to this, other challenges related to staffing; low pay; shared premises; regulation; Care Inspectorate expectations; paperwork, and meeting the needs of children.

Below is a selection of comments:

"The biggest challenge is managing behaviour for some of our children without impacting time spent with other children."

"Time to complete Paperwork!! Managing to observe children in your keyworker group & input in their learning journals to then be able to plan for each child."

"Constant changes by care inspectorate and sometimes feel there are high expectations."

"Being a let within the school building, they move us whenever they want the space. Also, the ridiculous qualifications required for a part time post."

"Paperwork and sourcing good affordable training that is on offer at a time and place that doesn't overlap with work hours."

"Sometimes not being able to provide one to one support for children with additional support needs."

"Excess paper work, in relation to time spent on the floor, and how the demanded paper work is more focussed to ELC with minimal direction to OSC."

"Low hourly rate. Low wages push to seek for another job instead of doing something you are passionate about."

"Lack of clarity about what the Care Inspectorate are looking for and getting lots of different information from different people."

If you could change one thing about working in OSC, what would it be?

Although a handful of responses indicated that they wouldn't change anything about working in OSC, the most common responses related to better pay and conditions; more hours of work; more holidays; less paperwork; better professional recognition and status; additional financial support, and for services to have their own premises.

Below is a selection of comments from respondents:

"There would be more time for staff to meet outside of working with the children, to discuss the goals and ambitions they have for their OSC and ensure that management provides the right support to enable this."

"Not being considered when it comes to child wellbeing/safety, TAC meetings for example."

"That the profession was more respected, and more funding/ grants were provided to organisations. As a team we provide, play, pastoral care and educate children on their right amongst other subjects."

"Fair salary, considering the responsibility of the childcare sector."

“More budget available for this age range. It is not a babysitting service, it's about furthering these young adults' skills for life.”

QUALIFICATIONS

63% of respondents had a qualification at the appropriate level (or higher) for registration with the SSSC (SVQ Social Services (Children and Young People) SCQF Level 7 29%; HNC Childhood Practice at SCQF Level 7 15%; SVQ in Playwork at SCQF level 7 with 2 additional units from SVQ Social Services (Children & Young People 18%; PDA Childhood Practice 1%).

QUALIFICATIONS What impact has the learning from the required qualification (completed or underway) had/is having on your practice?

Of those who responded to this question, most of the responses were positive and described how it has built confidence in their day-to-day practice, and they have gained a better understanding of how to support children's growth and development. A very small number said that it had no benefit, and a few highlighted the difficulty of completing qualifications whilst working and also having a personal life.

Below is a selection of comments from respondents:

“It has deepened my understanding about childhood development and play practices.”

“It can be difficult to juggle a full-time job and still make time after work to do a qualification and have time for myself.”

“Gaining my qualification helped me secure my job in OSC. Supported and enhanced my learning and professional personal development.”

“My qualification has enhanced my knowledge on how children learn and develop which enables me as a practitioner to provide the right experiences to children based on their individual needs.”

“Better knowledge and understanding of child's needs and development and how to positively and confidently support them in their development.”

“My whole practice is based upon what I learnt during my SVQ3 and regular training I attend throughout the year.”

“I found the psychology and sociology aspects of the course very useful. It gave me knowledge to observe children's behaviour and development.”

“Having a solid background knowledge of childhood practice has a positive impact on my practice. On the floor, it has given me skills and understanding to support children in a wide variety of situations. My learning has also given me the knowledge to input effective planning and evaluation into the service.”

“More knowledgeable in children's development. How to address play & set up play spaces. Work with & be part of a team. How to look at children's holistic development & meet their needs through care & support.”

“I believe my original qualification was the best: more in-depth. I am constantly developing my understanding by way of online webinars. This helps me to be aware of latest trends and thinking, which helps me deal with situations in the best way possible.”

QUALIFICATIONS Is there anything missing from the qualification which you think would be beneficial to know?

The majority of respondents to this question said that ‘nothing’ was missing from the qualifications. Others however said they would like qualifications to be more specific for school age childcare and supporting older children as well as children with autism, ASN and disabilities. Some suggestions were around very practical skills such as First Aid, sign language, moving and handling.

Below is a selection of comments from respondents:

“First aid training should be mandatory in gaining a qualification.”

“My qualification was mostly focused on ELC it would have been useful to have covered child development on children in ages 5-12 years more in depth. And more focus on pedagogy which would have been useful to translate over to OSC.”

“More qualification regarding school aged children and playwork. More short courses geared towards play in school aged childcare settings.”

“More course content, maybe some books to read or some lectures.”

QUALIFICATIONS Through your completion or current undertaking of a qualification, and aside from any professional development, has the qualification had any impact (positive/negative) on your personal life/development?

Although the majority of respondents said that undertaking the qualification had been positive in their OSC practice, and also in their private life. Several said that it had either had no impact or a negative one on their life; in these instances, most indicated that it was hard to balance work, study and family life.

Below is a selection of comments from respondents:

“My playwork qualification had a positive impact in that I think of myself as a playworker. Play has always been core to my beliefs in my work with children and young people.”

“Yes, by carrying out the BA (currently undertaking) I feel like I can and want to be involved in more managerial tasks.”

“The HNC Childhood Practice has enhanced my knowledge of child development.”

“Yes. I gained qualifications as my children were growing up and developed my knowledge of their development.”

“As a mature student with two young children, undertaking my qualifications was not easy. But it has had a positive impact on my parenting skills.”

“It’s not been a negative thing in my life and the positive thing is that it’s helped me understand things better.”

“It has made me manage my time better.”

“Increased stress and less time for family.”

“Negative- have to work weekends as no time at work.”

“It was hard working 2 jobs and fitting this in.”

“The reason I work part time is to fit in personal family commitments which I sometimes feel having to do training etc can be a struggle to balance. I know learning is helpful and important but it can get stressful when you only do hours that suit your personal circumstance.”

“It was a struggle whilst completing my qualifications to work and study but now that I have achieved it has neither a negative or positive affect apart from allowing me to do the job that I want to do.”

QUALIFICATIONS Do you have other qualifications which are not currently acceptable for registration as a worker in out of school care but you think should be? If so what is it/what are they, and why do you think they should be accepted?

Not many suggestions were provided here and most suggestions related to management or psychology degrees which respondents felt would be useful for working in OSC, and should be recognised as such.

“Yes, I have a bachelors degree in management and believe this is very beneficial to my day-to-day working life and can benefit the sector.”

“A degree in international business and management- the learning and skills from this degree are transferable.”

“I have modules from a psychological studies degree I did. Some of those should be acceptable as some deal with adolescent, food and behaviour, attachment theory.”

“Life skills should be part of Out of School Care, there are lots of people great at paperwork and no people skills but because they have the qualification they can work.”

SUPPORT WORKER RESULTS IN FULL

43 responses*

(*Due to the number of responses being less than 100, the percentages attached are only an indicative figure- greater accuracy requires 100 responses or more.)

GENDER

Female: 34 (79%)

Male: 9 (21%)

AGE

Age range: 17 – 62

Median age: 33

Average age: 38

DISABILITY

Yes: 2 (5%)

No: 40 (93%)

Prefer not to say: 1 (3%)

ETHNICITY

White Scottish/English/Welsh/Northern Irish: 33 (78%)

White Other: 5 (12%)

Asian/Asian UK: Pakistani: 2 (5%)

Asian/Asian UK: Bangladeshi: 1 (3%)

Asian/Asian UK: Indian: 1 (3%)

Black UK: Caribbean: 1 (3%)

SECTOR

Voluntary/3rd/Charitable: 18 (42%)

Private: 8 (19%)

Public: 9 (21%)

Don't know: 7 (16%)

Unknown: 1 (3%)

SERVICE

Only OSC: 32 (74%)

Combined ELC & OSC: 11 (26%)

REGISTRATION

SSSC: 40 (93%)

Unknown: 3 (7%)

Do you see working in OSC as a career?

Yes: 26 (60%)

No: 5 (12%)

Unsure: 12 (28%)

How satisfied are you in your job?

Very: 22 (51%)

Fairly: 20 (47%)

Not very: 1 (2%)

Dissatisfied: 0

Hours term-time per week

Range: 3 – 47.5

Median: 17

Average: 19

Hours holiday-time per week

Range: 3 – 45 hours

Median: 20

Average: 22

SALARY PER HOUR

Range: £5.63 – £12.27

Median: £10

Average: £9.98

YEARS WORKING IN THE SECTOR

Range: Less than a year – 22 years

Median: 2 years

Average: 3 years

WELLBEING Currently how stressed do you feel?

Not at all stressed: 13 (30%)

Slightly stressed: 20 (47%)

Stressed: 8 (19%)

Very stressed: 2 (5%)

At breaking point: 0

WELLBEING Currently how physically tired do you feel?

Not at all tired: 4 (9%)

Slightly tired: 22 (51%)

Tired: 13 (30%)

Exhausted: 4 (9%)

At breaking point: 0

WELLBEING Currently how would you rate your mental wellbeing?

Great: 7 (16%)

Good: 13 (30%)

OK: 17 (40%)

Not very good: 6 (14%)

At breaking point: 0

Would you like to provide any further information about the answers you have just provided? (All answers will be treated in confidence and anonymised in final results, if used.)

Of those who replied to this question, responses were varied with no overall commonality to responses.

Below is a selection of comments from respondents:

“Not consistently but sometimes work can be very draining. I feel sometimes the work I do isn't recognised enough and feel I am not given equal opportunities as others, there is now no development for me in my current role so there's nothing for me to work towards or better myself to.”

“I feel well prepared to my job role and can attend additional trainings. Also, I got support from management so I don't see my job as stressful.”

“Having to work another job alongside my OSC role as I am not provided with enough hours to maintain a fair income. As a result, I find it more challenging to balance both shift patterns and my free time.”

“Very poor level of professionalism with management. Work is disorganised and puts staff under stress.”

“I have health issues, which make me tired and stressed about working longer hours during the holiday.”

“I find the managers take well-being of staff very seriously always asking how we are doing, what we are comfortable with, what we are unsure about, if we are finding any issues, and how they can improve work environment for staff and children. It's so nice to see managers taken such active role that way.”

In general, what is the best thing about working in OSC?

The most common response focused on working with children: seeing them learn and develop, and building relationships with them, which made it a fun job. A number of respondents also highlighted their work colleagues and also some said the work hours suited.

Below is a selection of comments from respondents:

“It's lovely and satisfying working and playing with the children. The hours I work fit in well with my main job.”

“Providing the children with a choice and freedom to play how they want and giving them opportunities to take them on trips during the holidays!”

“Introducing children to some of the amazing aspects life. games, arts, cultures, nature, etc.”

“I love working with young people and my team is a really supportive one. The further training I am receiving is also making me feel more knowledgeable and equipped in this sector for the future.”

“I love to play with children. I love to hear their stories.”

“The best thing working here is you don’t just feel like a number you feel like part of a team and you get that feeling very quickly especially being a new member of staff it can be daunting going into new work place but honestly feel great going into work.”

“Helping the kids learn about new subjects and seeing them enthusiastic to use what they have learned.”

In general, what is the biggest challenge about working in OSC?

Children’s behaviour, meeting the needs of children, paperwork, part-time hours, pay premises and difficulties in the staff team were all highlighted. One respondent highlighted that they don’t see any challenges as these are all handled well by managers.

Below is a selection of comments from respondents.

“Handling challenging behaviour with limited staff and resources.”

“The pay isn’t enough and lack of career progression opportunity.”

“Lack of communication/miscommunication between senior and less experienced staff.”

“The biggest challenge is that we have keeping moving around the school all the time because there’s not enough space. Teachers in the school not being very helpful either with things.”

“I don’t see challenges as such as managers are always noticing the challenges so doesn’t become a challenge to staff.”

If you could change one thing about working in OSC, what would it be?

The main responses related to better pay and conditions; better professional recognition; less paperwork, and the service having their own space or premises.

Below is a selection of comments from respondents.

“More information to parents/carers about how important play is to a child’s development and the official bodies and professional status of the staff that are involved in play.”

“Less paper work and more actual work.”

“To have our own building to be based in rather than using the schools’ gym/dining halls.”

“Have our own space and settings e.g. kitchen where we can do baking etc.”

QUALIFICATIONS

40% currently have a qualification suitable for registration with the SSSC (SVQ Social Services (Children and Young People) SCQF Level 7 16%; HNC Childhood Practice at SCQF Level 7 2%; SVQ in Playwork at SCQF level 7 with 2 additional units from SVQ Social Services (Children & Young People) 2%; National Certificate Early Education and Childcare 5%; SVQ Social Services (Children and Young People) SCQF Level 6 5; PG Diploma Childhood Practice 2%).

QUALIFICATIONS What impact has the learning from the required qualification (completed or underway) had/is having on your practice?

Most of the responses were positive- people feel more knowledgeable and confident in their practice. Negatives related to the time taken to undertake the qualification and how this impacts on work-life balance.

Below is a selection of comments from respondents:

"It is really enhancing it. I am able to understand the research and knowledge behind my practice and work guidelines."

"Enables me to carry out my best practice in the safest manner and making sure policies are up to date and followed."

"Good and bad, it's difficult to juggle study time and feel like I don't have down-time to myself whilst also working at my setting. There are absolute benefits to how I practice but they come at a mental cost it seems."

"I know about the children's development at ASC and when they need more help with things."

"It has helped me a lot- I have become more confident and am able to handle different situations when needed."

QUALIFICATIONS Is there anything missing from the qualification which you think would be beneficial to know?

The only suggestion was about managing children's behaviour.

QUALIFICATIONS Through your completion or current undertaking of a qualification, and aside from any professional development, has the qualification had any impact (positive/negative) on your personal life/development?

Roughly half of those who responded to this question found it a positive experience whilst half found it a negative one. On the positive, respondents said it has boosted their self-confidence and self-esteem but those who have found it to be negative highlighted the difficulty in balancing work, life and study.

Below is a selection of comments from respondents:

"It has given me a focus outwith working hours and confidence when talking about my job."

"I try to separate the work life from my private life- not always manageable."

"It has negatively impacted my ability to pursue my passion (my art)."

"Positive I now know more about taking care of children and babies for the future when I have my own kids."

"It gave me my qualifications in HNC child care and education but it stopped me from seeing family and friends so much."

"Yes, a positive impact on my personal life/development."

"Education always has a positive impact on life."

QUALIFICATIONS Do you have other qualifications which are not currently acceptable for registration as a worker in out of school care but you think should be? If so, what is it/what are they, and why do you think they should be accepted?

Few responses were received for this question.

Below is a selection of comments from respondents:

"Degree in Nursing. Transferable ethics and knowledge of being in a very responsible role, advocate for the child, confidentiality knowledge and ethic core of doing the very best for someone and not harming them within our care, professional in communicating with management, peers and parents/carers."

"HNC care and administrative practice."

"I have a BSc Hons in Psychology, I feel that some of the modules should be transferable. Even though it might not constitute as an acceptable qualification I feel that I have been able to use the knowledge from some of my modules i.e. attachment, brain development in play etc atypical development in my practice."