



# Scottish Out of School Care Network Annual Review 2021 - 2022



## The Scottish Out of School Care Network

Established in 1991, we provide a voice for school age childcare services and the children and families who rely on it. We influence national policies and provide a range of practical resources, events, information, advice, quality assurance and training to support them.

We advocate for the sector, carry out research, and help develop national and local strategies to support and grow the sector. We are passionate about children's rights to the play, care, learning, friendship and fun that good quality services provide.

## School Age Childcare

The school age care childcare sector is the largest provider of play, care, and informal learning opportunities for school-aged children. There are nearly 1000 registered school age childcare services in Scotland, 588 breakfast clubs and 482 holiday services. More than 50,000 children of school age are registered in childcare. (Care Inspectorate, 2021).

Daycare of children is defined by the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010 as a service that provides care for children on non-domestic premises for a total of more than two hours a day and on at least six days per year.

## Impact of the pandemic

Since February 2020, with the public health measures to stop Covid-19 virus transmission, we delivered all our work online. We are a key link between national government and the school age childcare sector, and we work intensely to support services and staff as they grapple with new rules and challenges.

Our sector assisted some of the most vulnerable children and supported the children of keyworkers, during various stages of full lockdown, partial, then full re-opening.

We give our profound thanks to all the services and staff across Scotland who have delivered much needed care, play and friendship opportunities for children, whether in lockdowns, or as services re-opened at different stages.

## Objectives and Activities

The objects of the charity are the advancement of the education and social welfare of children, by the development of daycare and recreational facilities for children. This is all school age childcare services, after school childcare, breakfast clubs and all daycare during school holidays.

We are committed to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), equality and inclusion, in particular Articles 31; the right to culture leisure, rest and play; Article 12, the right to consultation and Article 18; states parties to develop appropriate services to support families, including assistance with childcare for working parents. We also have a particular focus on children in need or in poverty (Article 22) and support the provision of care for children with disabilities (article 23).

We are also committed to promoting and delivering the outcomes of Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC).

*"Hi All.  
Thank you for  
sending all the  
information  
today. I was  
thinking it  
might be a  
long night  
reading the  
document and  
pulling some  
information  
together for  
clubs, but  
thankfully you  
have already  
done that."*

*"Thanks  
again for your  
support and  
getting this out  
so quick."*

## Chairperson's Review

The 2021 to 2022 financial year was still very much a pandemic year and I thank all of the services for doing their best to provide the care, play and learning you provide for school age children across Scotland.

On behalf of the SOSCN Board I also thank our funders; the Scottish Government, through the Children, Young People and Families Early Intervention Fund, and an additional grant of nearly £35,000 to recognise the extra work of SOSCN in meeting the demands of the pandemic and associated health measures.

Throughout different periods of campaigning for the specific needs of the school age childcare sector, we know that many parents and carers from services joined in by writing to the relevant Ministers and MSPs and this helped our staff team demonstrate the importance of this valuable sector.

Our staff team met many challenges and worked hard on your behalf to ensure your needs were voiced at every level, I thank them for the work they do and their commitment to school age childcare. My fellow board members have also been so supportive, and we want to thank all of the membership for being part of SOSCN, we would not be as strong without so many of you being part of the organisation.

Ann Dick, Chairperson, SOSCN



## Chief Executive Review

This has been another very turbulent year for all, and I would like to pay tribute to the services which did their best against huge financial, staffing, health measures and many other pressures, to try to keep going and to keep offering much needed care to children.

To all the service leaders, maybe postponing their retirements, working through their holidays and just showing that grit and determination to support their staff, parents and children no matter what, we know who you are, and we thank you all.

We too had to work extra hard, over the past few years, and we really appreciate all of you who filled in surveys, helped with research, attended events and contributed your views, as this really helped us to represent you at over one hundred representative and engagement meetings with the Scottish Government, regulators and other agencies at a national level in order to get support to the sector. We do appreciate the commitment of the various Scottish Government teams we worked with to also trying their hardest to get support to the overall childcare sector.

Children's voices were also heard as so many of you sent in the "Stories of Summer" videos and photos which helped share your good practice in letting children lead the way in your holiday provision. As our chair has pointed out, parent power was needed in our campaigning work so again we are grateful for all who helped with that too.

What follows is an overview of our work for 2021-22, due to the restrictions Greig was unable to do in person training, although he will be back in the summer of 2022 to do that again. I really must personally thank Andrew and Finlay as none of this work could have been done without them, and I thank all of the SOSCN board, membership, partner organisations for all of the support you have given us in this, once again, historical year.

Irene Audain MBE Chief Executive



## Policy Development

Our policy activities throughout the year have focused on responding to the needs of the sector, in terms of the impact of the pandemic, and supporting the production of Scottish Government, sector specific, operating guidance and financial support packages. Due to Covid-19 our representative work at a national government level was intensified with over one hundred meetings attended with various civil servants and staff from the regulatory bodies and other agencies.

## Policy Framework for School Age Childcare

Good progress has been made in national policy developments which meet many of the “asks” in our 2022 manifesto. There is a Scottish Government commitment to developing a wraparound school age childcare system by the end of this Parliament. This will include free places for low- income children and families, free breakfast and lunch for all primary school children and integrated holiday care, play and food provision in school holidays.

## Campaigning for Scotland’s School Age Childcare Sector

Services continued to struggle financially, and we wrote to Ministers and campaigned for financial support for the sector, based on our own and the Scottish Government’s financial sustainability surveys. As a result of this work, alongside that of other national partner organisations, a £9.8 million Childcare Omicron Impact Funding package was delivered in March 2022 by the Scottish Government, to help the childcare private, voluntary and childminding sector, with costs of addressing this new variant.

Selected quotes on the fund:

*“Thank you so much. You have no idea how timely this is.”*

*“Fantastic, and very welcome news. Well done to all who secured this for the childcare sector.”*

*“Fantastic news, well done Irene and team, appreciate all your support and hard work.”*

*“Great news! Well done team SOSCN.”*

*“Thank you – good news for sector.”*

## Other Policy Campaigning

We are part of several UK or Scotland wide campaigns to End Child Poverty

For the local elections in 2022 we published our own Manifesto for School Age Childcare, calling for more support from local authorities to services in their areas.

*“Thank you so much. You have no idea how timely this is.”*

*“Thank you for all the, work, effort, support, and encouragement you have always provided but especially over these past 2 years.”*

*“Hi. We just wanted to say that your responses to the SSSC consultation are excellent and accurately convey the feelings of our workforce; thank you so much for taking the time to respond on behalf of OoSC organisations and for presenting such detailed arguments. Thank you for your continued support.”*

*“Thank you to SOSCN for keeping us well informed.”*

## Policy Consultations

- [SSSC A Register for the Future consultation](#)
- [Scottish Government National Care Service proposals](#)
- [Scottish Government Open Space Strategies and Play Sufficiency Assessment Regulations National Planning Framework 4 \(Draft\)](#)
- [Scottish Government Coronavirus \(Recovery and Reform\)\(Scotland\) Bill](#)
- [Scottish Government Becoming a Fair Work Nation consultation](#)

## Research and Surveys

- [Summer of Play survey \(May\)](#)
- [Financial Sustainability Survey \(October\)](#)
- [Annual Workforce survey](#) with [additional sections](#) (November)
- [Stories of Summer](#) – from services and with children reporting in videos and photographs (August)
- Scottish Government Analytic Exchange Programme: We published the [literature database](#) and [research findings](#) and on the economic and other benefits of school age childcare. (October)
- We provided contacts and expertise to researchers commissioned by the Scottish Government to look at the specific issues of rural and island communities in terms of childcare, and another research project looking at the skills and qualifications of the current childcare workforce.
- We engaged with organisations taking part in the Government led Civitech Challenge to find ways of measuring the needs of families for school age childcare.

## Online Networking and Training Events

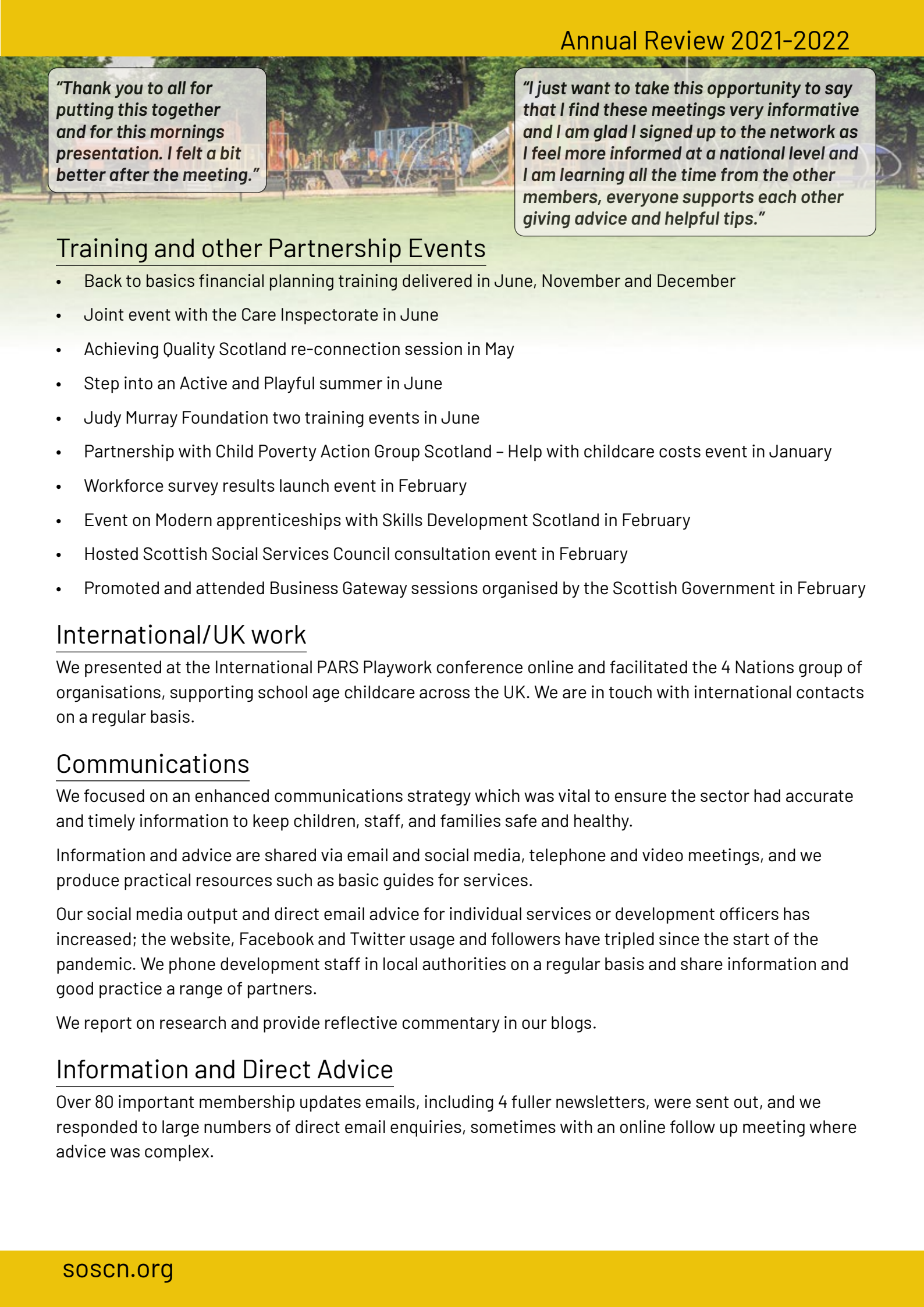
- Over 24 online events for networking, training and consultation were held. Feedback was always positive, with nearly a thousand participants overall, although many will have attended more than one event.
- General networking events were held in May, June and September, and the AGM was held in December.
- Five partnership events with the Scottish Government School Age Childcare team were held in June, November and December.

*"Thanks so much guys (our pals) for your hard work in flying the flag and always fighting our corner. Thanks too for always liking our posts on Twitter so much appreciated. It's good to recognise the staff teams' efforts through this last two years of trauma and ups and downs, basically always striving to bring quality play to the children."*

*"As a new member of your organisation and new to After School Care, I would like to thank you for your helpful and informative emails. I am delighted to have joined you. Thank you once again."*

*"Thank you very much for a most informative newsletter with very helpful information that will enhance our provision and others. As a new service (this is our twelfth week in operation), the information from your organisation has been so helpful and very much appreciated."*





*"Thank you to all for putting this together and for this mornings presentation. I felt a bit better after the meeting."*

*"I just want to take this opportunity to say that I find these meetings very informative and I am glad I signed up to the network as I feel more informed at a national level and I am learning all the time from the other members, everyone supports each other giving advice and helpful tips."*

## Training and other Partnership Events

- Back to basics financial planning training delivered in June, November and December
- Joint event with the Care Inspectorate in June
- Achieving Quality Scotland re-connection session in May
- Step into an Active and Playful summer in June
- Judy Murray Foundation two training events in June
- Partnership with Child Poverty Action Group Scotland – Help with childcare costs event in January
- Workforce survey results launch event in February
- Event on Modern apprenticeships with Skills Development Scotland in February
- Hosted Scottish Social Services Council consultation event in February
- Promoted and attended Business Gateway sessions organised by the Scottish Government in February

## International/UK work

We presented at the International PARS Playwork conference online and facilitated the 4 Nations group of organisations, supporting school age childcare across the UK. We are in touch with international contacts on a regular basis.

## Communications

We focused on an enhanced communications strategy which was vital to ensure the sector had accurate and timely information to keep children, staff, and families safe and healthy.

Information and advice are shared via email and social media, telephone and video meetings, and we produce practical resources such as basic guides for services.

Our social media output and direct email advice for individual services or development officers has increased; the website, Facebook and Twitter usage and followers have tripled since the start of the pandemic. We phone development staff in local authorities on a regular basis and share information and good practice a range of partners.

We report on research and provide reflective commentary in our blogs.

## Information and Direct Advice

Over 80 important membership updates emails, including 4 fuller newsletters, were sent out, and we responded to large numbers of direct email enquiries, sometimes with an online follow up meeting where advice was complex.



## Staff

Irene Audain MBE, Chief Executive

Andrew Shoolbread, Policy and Research Manager

Finlay Wright, Information Officer

Greig Cavanagh, Physical Activity Coordinator

Anne-Marie Mackin (freelance AQS assessor)

## Trustees

Anne Dick (Chair)

Margaret Graham (Vice-Chair)

Ann McKenzie (Treasurer)

Stuart Patterson

## Professional Advisers

Independent Examiner: Alexander Sloan & Co., 180 St Vincent Street, Glasgow

Bank: Bank of Scotland, Argyle Street, Glasgow

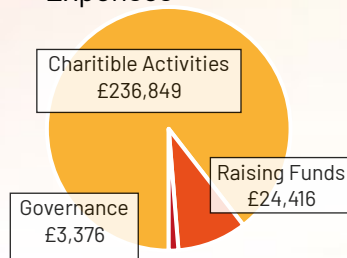
Children, Young People  
and Families Early  
Intervention Fund core grant  
administered by CORRA  
Foundation



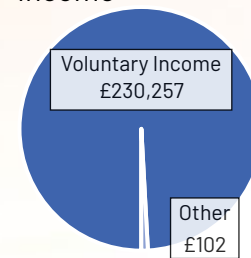
## Financial Report

Extracted from examined accounts 2020-2021, prepared by Alexander Sloan & Co.

### Expenses



### Income



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The Scottish Out of School Care Network is a company limited by guarantee with charitable status and is a Scottish registered charity, Charity Number: SC020520. Company Number: SC200662.

SOSCN is a Living Wage Employer.

Registered Address: 4th Floor, 41 St Vincent Place, Glasgow G1 2ER

Tel: 0141 564 1284 | Web: [soscn.org](http://soscn.org) | Email: [info@soscn.org](mailto:info@soscn.org)