

# Scottish Out of School Care Network Annual Review 2022-2023



## 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.

## 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).

## Chairperson's Report

I am grateful to my fellow Board of Directors for their ongoing service, and we welcomed two new board members in this time, thank you Marie and Mairi for bringing in new perspectives to help in our work.

It was so exciting to meet many of you in person again at the conference and AGM in November 2022, and feedback tells us everyone enjoyed this opportunity to network again too.

Looking over the wide range of activities covered in this report, I thank the staff team for their ongoing commitment to supporting the sector and in speaking up for you in campaigns and consultations as always, as well as delivering training and quality improvement work.

Timely and speedy information was essential to all services in coming out of the pandemic and I thank SOSCN for ensuring that we got the information we needed as soon as possible, and often carefully summarised to save us the work of wading through large documents too.

Thanks to our funders, the Scottish Government Children, Young People and Families, Early Intervention Fund core funding, and an extra grant to cover all the time given to supporting the Scottish Government's response to the pandemic over the last few years.

Finally, thank all of you as members of SOSCN, I know this is a sector under a great deal of strain, so we are even more grateful when you give us your time by coming along to events and responding to surveys and requests for case studies, photos and stories to help campaign for you all.

**Anne M Dick Chairperson**





## Chief Executive Officer's Overview

Thank you to all of you who engaged with us in events, training, surveys and in raising your ongoing issues around sustainability, workforce staffing shortages and in highlighting your good practice. Your response to our surveys really helps us demonstrate to Ministers, government staff and regulatory bodies your current concerns, as well as anxieties about the future.

We are grateful to those of you who gave us such lovely feedback in our membership survey, it shows we are on the right track in terms of the priorities of our work, and how you valued our support during these difficult last few years.

The Scottish Government is continuing to work on the development of the new framework for school age childcare and is continuing to fund a variety of different services through the Access to Childcare Fund and new Early Adopters, in order to test how different models of delivery work. They are also consulting parents and carers, and, most important of all, children on what they want in a school age childcare service. We are working closely with them and plan to visit many of the services in the summer of 2023.

This period also saw overall a living costs crisis across the UK, with large fuel increases as well as even basic food items jumping up in price. We are grateful to many school age childcare services working hard to support their children, families and communities through food and clothing banks and signposting to such support where they can.

I'll close by thanking the whole sector for the sterling work you do, despite the pressures you face every day.

**Irene Audain MBE Chief Executive**

## Continued Impact of the Pandemic

In 2022 - 2023 we continued to provide mainly online meetings and events but from the summer of 2022 we increased in person activities, including training, meetings and towards the end of 2022 events in person.

The impact of the pandemic on the beneficiaries of our work, the children and families who need school age childcare, and the services which provide this care has been profound. Some services closed and did not re-open, while many others are restricted in what they can offer due to a general staffing shortage in childcare and very specific shortages in school age childcare.

This, in turn, has influenced our work, in terms of policy, research, quality improvement and training support.

***"Just wanted to drop a line to say thank you so much for all your regular updates throughout the covid period. It has taken a weight off my mind to know that following the advice you gave has kept our members safe and kept us right within the law. You guys are the best!"***

***"Thank you for all the information that you continue to supply for out of school care projects across Scotland. Your continued support is much appreciated."***





Beneficiaries' views on SOSCN support during the pandemic and as we come out of it show that our work to support them was greatly appreciated and valued by the sector.

Our membership survey specifically asked for feedback on how we support the sector; results were that:

92% strongly agree and 8% agreed "we need a national organisation like SOSCN to campaign for us".

89 % strongly agreed and 11% agreed "we need the information and advice SOSCN provides".

87% Strongly agreed and 12% agreed "We appreciate the support and networking SOSCN provides",

67% Strongly agreed, 25% agreed and 8% neutral "Our children and families have benefitted from the support SOSCN provides to school age childcare services (indirectly)

***"They have been an invaluable source of support during the pandemic, I was able to speak with the team directly and get advice and support which offered reassurance in what was a hugely unsettling time for the service. My staff have benefitted from face-to-face training in play and support children with additional support needs. I have benefitted from the networking events, knowing I was not a lone voice in issues impacting service provision again offers reassurance."***

***"Some really good links on the essential guidance! A lot of this has changed over the last 24 months and really useful to have it in one place."***

***"During COVID filtering out the information that directly affected out of school care was such a big help and saved so much time."***

***"In the height of COVID, I would have been lost without SOSCN keeping us right with the forever changing guidance. Their continuous support for a sector which goes unnoticed most of the time is second to none and I know that since working in this sector I would have struggled without them!"***





## Policy Representation, Consultation and Campaigns

We always raise any current issues in school age childcare and give our expert opinion on any proposals from Scottish Government, regulatory bodies and other institutions. For this year this was focused on the issues of sustainability, workforce issues and inclusion of children with disabilities and additional support needs.

We represented school age childcare at over 90 meetings led by the Scottish Government, and with regulatory bodies and other national partnership organisations, including education and training providers, and local development staff.

This can be grouped into Scottish Government meetings on the development of the school age childcare framework and food and activities holiday programmes, including providing induction meetings for new members of the school age childcare team, and official representation on their reference group.

As we emerged from the pandemic, we attended the last two Covid-19 childcare sector specific groups, and we continue to engage through regular meetings of the Childcare Sector Working Group.

We met with individual senior staff across Children and Families, including workforce and financial health check plans, as well as groups relating to Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC), the National Curriculum and Assessment Board and with Cybersecurity specialist staff at events.

We facilitated a meeting with the school age childcare team and our group of specialist services for children with disabilities and additional support needs.

Other agencies we regularly engage with include representation on various working groups of the Scottish Social Services Council, the Care Inspectorate, and providers of the Childhood Practice qualifications. We were involved in the National Play Council and engaged with a range of play and school age childcare providers.

We supported the work of the Access to Childcare Fund and report launch and contributed to A Scotland that Cares campaign meeting.

We set up a 4 Nations UK forum and website and regularly meet with local development staff and contacts across the school age childcare field in the UK and abroad.

***"Their campaigning for our Clubs to be helped financially I think definitely prevented us from closing 2 if not all 3 of our clubs."***



***"The support we receive gives us confidence to provide our services. Grants from the government over the last couple of years which SOSCN campaigned for helped with our recovery i.e., loss of income."***

***"Brilliant service and we would be lost without it. They are the VOICE of our sector as without them there would be no one to advocate for us. The sector is not recognised for the good that it does and the benefits that it provides to families. We need a voice and we are glad that we have SOSCN."***

## Consultations

We responded to the following consultations:

**Inspection of early learning and childcare and school age childcare services in Scotland | Scottish Government**

<https://soscn.org/downloads/consultations/joint-inspection-proposals-soscn-response.pdf>

**Let's Talk Scottish Education | Scottish Government**

<https://soscn.org/downloads/consultations/soscn-response-scottish-education-discussion.pdf>

**Social Care: Independent Review of Inspection, Scrutiny and Regulation in Scotland - call for evidence | Scottish Government**

<https://soscn.org/downloads/consultations/soscn-response-irsr-call-for-evidence.pdf>

A new **Charities Bill** was published in November 2022. The Social Justice and Social Security Committee were looking for written views on the new Charities Bill to gather feedback and understand what impact the changes in the Bill might have on charities across Scotland. We completed the short survey on this for the 3rd of February deadline.

**Inquiry into Child Poverty and Parental Employment | Social Justice and Social Security Committee**

<https://soscn.org/downloads/consultations/soscn-response-to-inquiry-on-child-poverty-and-parental-employment.pdf>

**Policy presentation** – Andrew delivered a presentation on current issues in School Age Childcare to the Cross-Party Group on Children and Young People (hosted by CIS).

## Policy Campaigns

We sent the letter below to each of the three candidates for First Minister. We asked for a continued commitment to the plans for the development and expansion of school age childcare and what they will do about the current workforce and financial sustainability issues facing the sector.

<https://soscn.org/blog/first-minister-public-letter-to-candidates>

We also wrote to the new Minister for Children and Young People and Keeping the Promise, Natalie Don, MSP, welcoming her to the post and inviting her to meet with us to discuss school age childcare.

### Shared Campaigns

We are co-signatories on several national UK or Scotland wide campaigns with End Child Poverty UK, and Child Poverty Action Group in Scotland, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and the Trussell Trust. One Parent Families Scotland lone parents under 25 campaigns, and All Kids Count – about the two child limit for benefits, and Guarantee our Essentials, for support to be given to families to afford the basics. We were among many organisations asking for the uplifts to the Scottish Child payment on Scotland.

***"SOSCN have provided training for new managers, resource kits for outdoor play and have made a real contribution in terms of how OOSC is perceived and delivered within our local authority."***

***"SOSCN helped us directly by championing the need to consider the additional support and funding required for all out-of-school childcare but also raised the profile of out-of-school childcare specifically directed to support children with complex additional support and learning needs."***



## Research and Consultancy

We delivered a consultancy and training project to a large multi-site school age childcare service to help improve overall quality of the services.

We surveyed the sector in terms of access to this year's food and holiday programme £10 million investment and a general survey to check on how everyone is doing.

Results can be found here:

<https://soscn.org/downloads/research/soscn-membership-survey-summer-2022.pdf>

<https://soscn.org/downloads/research/summer-of-2022-funding-survey-results.pdf>

We also produced papers on issues we are constantly raising on behalf of the school age childcare sector:

### **School Age Childcare Workforce Discussion Paper**

<https://soscn.org/downloads/news/sac-childcare-workforce-discussion-paper.pdf>

### **Specialist school-age childcare services supporting children with disabilities, complex needs and additional support needs**

<https://soscn.org/downloads/news/soscn-specialist-services-discussion-paper.pdf>

### **Background and discussion of regulated school age childcare**

<https://soscn.org/downloads/news/background-and-discussion-of-regulated-school-age-childcare-final.pdf>

We conducted the annual workforce survey and a parent and carer survey on Limited or Lack of Local School Age Childcare - Parent & Carer Impact Survey. Results of both were published in May 2023.

## Events and Training

Overall, for events and training, there were over 1000 attendees, and this included up to 100 children. In normal times, this could represent up to 40,000 children and 30,000 families registered with their services.

Feedback on all events and training is always highly positive:

*"The online information sessions provided by SOSCN over the past 3 years have been a lifeline and I know we have personally gained from them, not just for the content but for the opportunity to network and share ideas which in turn, helped us all through a very difficult time. I am looking forward to the SOSCN conference when we can once again network in person. I also use the SOSCN website at least once a week to help me with policy updating and to find out the latest updates from other organisations which have a direct impact on our sector. It is very reassuring to know that we have a national organisation looking out for us and promoting us at every opportunity."*





## On football coaching:

*"Can you come back and coach us again?"*

*"This fun, you are a good coach".*

*"Did you see my goal; I've scored 3 goals in a row!"*

## And staff responses:

*"The session was great; it was good to see the children having fun and getting involved".*

*"All the children had a great time; it was good to see children who do not normally enjoy taking part in group activities get involved. Greig was great with all the children and very encouraging".*

*"We would want more sessions in the future, it was great to have a football coach come to teach new skills through fun games"*



## We have hosted directly or supported indirectly a variety of online events:

- What it takes- supporting children with disabilities and complex needs (June)
- Networking opportunity- post summer catch-up (September)
- SSSC Codes of Practice Conversation (x2 September)
- Scottish Government Engagement event – Inspection of ELC and OSC services in Scotland (September)
- Care Inspectorate Event – Quality Improvement Framework (October)
- Access to Childcare Fund – the learning so far (October)

## We have restarted in-person training:

During the summer holidays Greig, the Physical Activity and Wellbeing Coordinator delivered four football training sessions and two during the October holidays. He has also written a blog post to gauge interest in further sessions during the holidays next year. (These training sessions are paid for by services.)

Andrew, Research and Policy Manager, has been working with two separate OSC services in Edinburgh and delivered "Back to basics" and GIRFEC training sessions. (These training sessions are paid for by services.)

Through our consultancy work with the multi-site service in Edinburgh, Andrew has delivered a total of 13 in-person sessions covering the UNCRC, GIRFEC, SHANARRI Wellbeing Outcomes, reframing behaviour, and ACEs sessions. Andrew and Irene, Chief Executive, also delivered a "Superhero playworker" session at their induction/staff development day. We have also delivered an online "Back to basics session".



- Sun 6th Nov all day training event Edinburgh, both Andrew and Greig
- SSSC online event on social media (November)
- Business Structures online event (Feb)
- In person Conference at Glasgow Hilton on 8th November. Clare Haughey MSP Minister for Children and Young People delivered a keynote address as have representatives from the Care Inspectorate and the SSSC. SOSCN delivered a reflective/interactive keynote on the theme of 'reconnecting.'
- Workshops were provided by: The Scottish Government SAC team on the development of the SAC policy; the Care Inspectorate on the Quality Improvement Framework, and Mairi Ferris on reconnecting through outdoor play. The AGM was held at the end of the day.

## Achieving Quality Scotland

This is our quality improvement resource which supports better practice in the sector. We have restarted this work in person, with services in Glasgow (funded through the Glasgow City Council). Andrew hosted an introduction meeting online in November and he and Irene delivered on site (or in our office) eight mentoring sessions to services by mid-February 2023. These are 8 large urban services so at least 3,200 children and 2,500 families are covered by this work.

## Information and social media

We continue to email as needed any updates to the guidance and summarise key points when needed, and we respond to requests for information and advice via email. We also meet online or on the telephone with various development staff or partner organisations.

Nearly 100 email updates were sent including 5 fuller newsletters and 7 blogs were published, we also shared the holiday and food programme newsletter for the holiday food and activities programme and 23 recruitment adverts were shared for services reflecting the ongoing workforce recruitment issues.

We also sent hard copy wall planners to the membership and produced an online Annual Review for the AGM. We sent out a policy update in December 2022.



### **Social Media**

Twitter 2302 followers

Facebook 1500 followers

### **Website**

Users: 11,491

Sessions: 15,272

## Staff

Irene Audain MBE, Chief Executive

Andrew Shoolbread, Policy and Research Manager

Patrick Morrison, Practice and Training Officer

Finlay Wright, Information Officer

Greig Cavanagh, Physical Activity Coordinator

Anne-Marie Mackin (freelance AQS assessor)

## Trustees

Anne Dick (Chair)

Ann McKenzie (Treasurer)

Mairi Ferris (Board Member)

Marie McQuade (Board Member)

## Professional Advisers

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

Bank: Bank of Scotland, Argyle Street, Glasgow

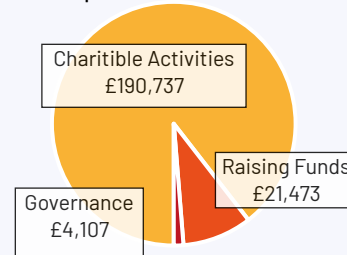
Children, Young People  
and Families Early  
Intervention Fund core grant  
administered by CORRA  
Foundation



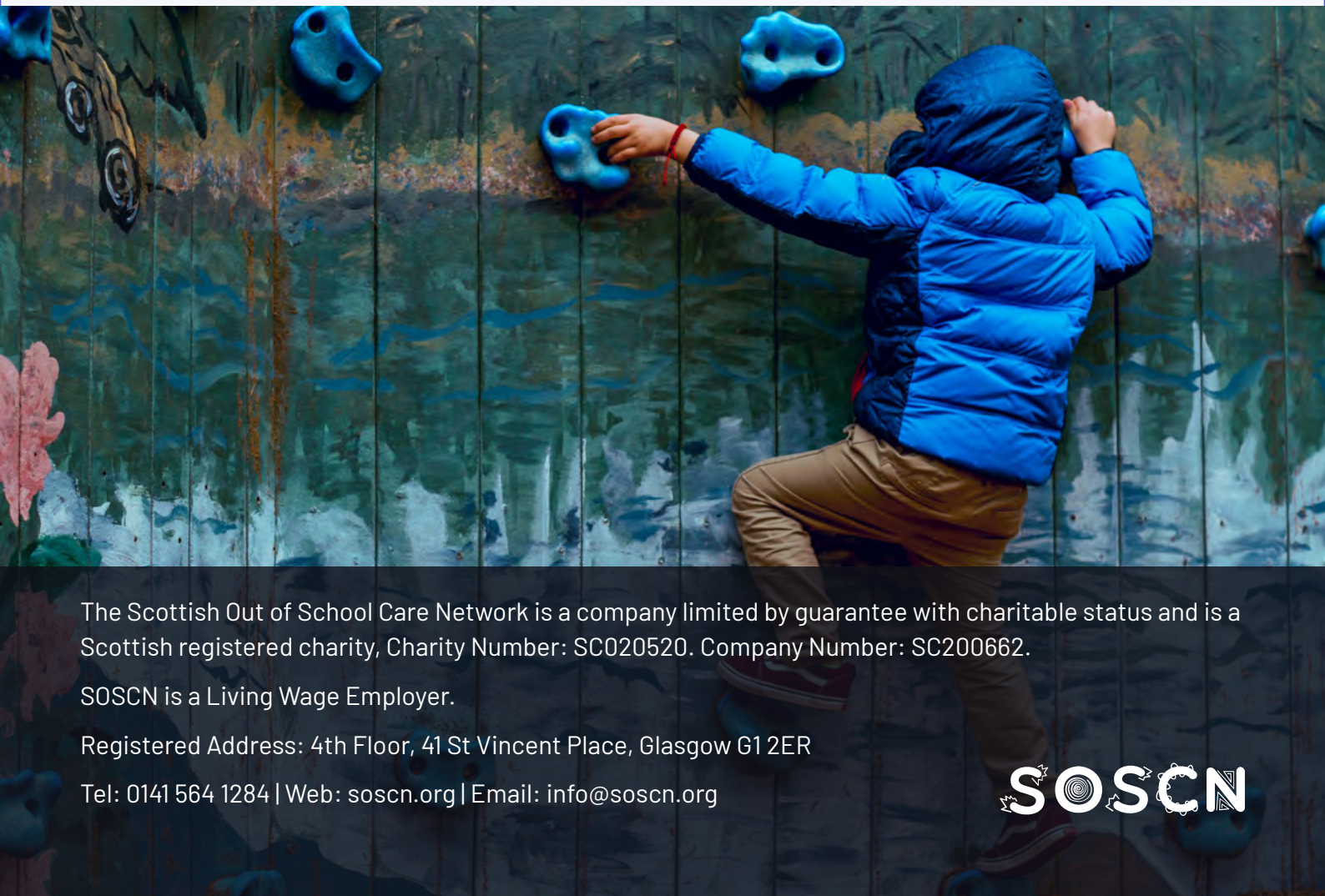
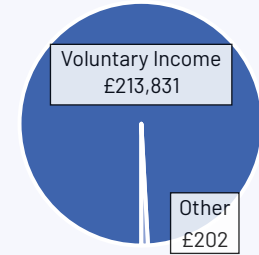
## Financial Report

Extracted from examined accounts 2022-2023, prepared by Alexander Sloan & Co.

### Expenses



### Income



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.

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