

# Scottish Out of School Care Network Annual Review 2023-2024



## 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 904 OSC services in Scotland; 682 where OSC is their main service, and 222 additional services providing OSC (Care Inspectorate Dec 2022)

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-day care 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; state 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

This has been an exciting year as the Board decided to expand the small team in order to offer more practice support and training to the sector, as well as addressing the future sustainability of the organisation.

We welcomed Patrick Morrison into the post of Practice and Training Officer in September 2023, and, as you will see later in the training and practice support section, he has hit the ground running and is already proving to be a valuable member of the team.

I would like to thank Ann McKenzie from OPFS who gave many years of service to us, especially as treasurer, and in her work in supporting service development, and we all wish her well in her retirement.

Stuart McCallum has also retired and again I thank him for his service to us and the school age childcare sector and we all wish him well.


We welcomed Caitlin Logan Carter, of OPFS, to the Board in February 2024.

I appreciate the hard work of the whole staff team, as they adapt and change to face the challenges of the future.

We thank our funders, for welcome grant support in these challenging times.

There would be no SOSCN without all the members who keep involved in our events, training, research and engagement with the team. Thank you all for being active and supportive with us, and of course, the children and families you support.

**Anne M Dick, Chairperson**

An illustration of several hands of different colors (brown, orange, pink, yellow) holding each other in a circle, symbolizing unity and support. The hands are rendered in a simple, flat style with visible fingers and wrists. Some wrists are wearing colorful cuffs or sleeves in shades of blue, yellow, and purple.

*"Thank you for sending through this information. We really appreciate all the help and support that SOSCN gives each and every out of school care service."*

A SOSCN member

## Chief Executive Officer overview

This has been a fairly dynamic year for SOSCN and the school age childcare sector.

We constantly raise the issues you are experiencing with workforce recruitment and retention, sustainability and in constantly having to deal with legislative changes, whilst, for many managers, having to go back to the floor, given staff shortages.

We are grateful to all who contributed to our research publications in this time. This gave us much needed evidence in terms of workforce issues, lack of access to school age childcare affecting parents and carers, and your experiences of care inspections.

We submitted formal evidence to the Scottish Covid 19 Inquiry, as what this sector experienced at that time must not be forgotten.

We continue to advocate for school age childcare across different levels of government and with the Scottish Parliament and Ministers.

As you will see SOSCN has at last expanded to offering online resources in our new shop and now offers online as well as in person training too.

I appreciate the technical work that has gone into this with both Finlay and Patrick collaborating well to get this off the ground. This is just the start, over time, we hope to offer more of what you tell us you need in terms of training, practice support and resources.

I also appreciate all who worked in partnership with us at events, or in training and information sessions.

All the staff team and board have taken a chance on investing for the future and have risen to the challenges of developing new resources and ways of delivering our support.

**Irene Audain MBE, Chief Executive**

## Our Trustees during this year

Anne Dick (Chair)

Ann McKenzie (Treasurer) Resigned 8th February 2024

Caitlin Logan Carter appointed 8th February 2024

Mairi Clare Ferris

Marie McQuade

Stuart Patterson (Resigned 1st May 2023)

## Our Staff

Irene Audain MBE, Chief Executive

Andrew Shoolbread, Policy and Research Manager

Finlay Wright, Information Officer

Patrick Morrison, Practice and Training Officer

Greig Cavanagh, Physical Activity Coordinator (part time)

Anne Marie Mackin, Sessional Quality Assurance Assessor



## Policy representation and engagement

### **Ministers and Parliament meetings**

We met the Minister for Children and Young People and Keeping the Promise, Natalie Don, MSP, at the Scottish Parliament in early June 2023 to discuss ongoing workforce and sustainability issues within the school age childcare sector.

Our Chief Executive gave evidence from our Parent and Carer Unmet Need for School Age Childcare Survey at the Scottish Parliament Social Justice and Social Security Committee - Inquiry into Child Poverty and Parental Employment on 25th May 2023.

Our Policy & Research Manager contributed to a Cabinet Minister for Education led anti-poverty round table summit in June 2023 and also attends the quarterly meetings of the Parliamentary Cross Party Group on Children and Young People. We met with Meghan Gallacher MSP, Chair of Parliamentary Cross Party Group on Children and Young People, later in the year to discuss school age childcare issues.

### **Scottish COVID-19 Inquiry**

We met with Umara Rashid, a lawyer with the COVID-19 inquiry, seeking our evidence in terms of how COVID-19 affected SAC services and the impact it had on children and families. We submitted a formal statement and over 35 items of evidence to the official Scottish COVID-19 Inquiry. We also arranged for a number of school age childcare service managers to submit their own oral evidence to the inquiry.

### **Representation and engagement**

We engaged with the UK Department of Work and Pensions regional managers across Scotland in over eight meetings and calls to arrange their input to helping parents with the costs of childcare.

### **Scottish Government and Statutory bodies**

We attended over 35 engagement meeting with Scottish Government officials, including 18 meeting with the Scottish Government school age childcare team. We had 20 meetings with the Care Inspectorate and 13 with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC). We have been instrumental in developing the revised Common Core Skills and Knowledge for the Children's Workforce, and managed the delivery and analysis of a feedback survey on the draft within tight timescales when no other organisation was able to do so. Our extensive work on qualifications is to ensure that the needs of school age children are considered, and our work ensure school age childcare staff see their roles reflected in regulatory guidance and practice documents.

We also engaged with local development staff, other national partner organisations, and individual experts to plan joint work and content of publications. We also hosted a 4 Nations UK-wide meeting with partner school age childcare support organisations in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland, to share developments across the UK. We will be exploring the differences in regulation in the future.

*"Really informative session reminding me why I do my job and how I can continue to improve my service experiences for the children."*

A SOSCN training participant



## Policy consultations

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>

Review of National Outcomes: call for evidence. Scottish Government

<https://soscn.org/downloads/consultations/national-outcomes-review-2023-soscn-response.pdf>

A Quality Framework for Early Learning and Childcare, School Aged Childcare and Childminding Services. Care Inspectorate and Education Scotland

<https://soscn.org/downloads/consultations/a-quality-framework-consultation-soscn-response.pdf>

## Policy campaigns

The CEO or SOSCN has been a co-signatory on letters, campaigns – UK or Scotland wide – all relating to child poverty.

End Young Parent Poverty: Top up the Scottish Child Payment. One Parent Families Scotland

<https://opfs.org.uk/policy-and-campaigns/campaigns/end-young-parent-poverty/>

All Kids Count: Lift the two-child limit. CPAG

<https://act.cpag.org.uk/page/44286/action/1?locale=en-GB>

Guarantee our Essentials: reforming Universal Credit to ensure we can all afford the essentials in hard times. Trussell Trust and Joseph Rowntree Foundation

<https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/guarantee-our-essentials>

Minister for Children, Young People and Keeping the Promise Letter

When the Scottish Government Programme for Government was published in September, the CEO wrote to the Minister for Children, Young People and Keeping the Promise outlining concerns about progress on school age childcare considering the budgetary issues being faced across government.

<https://soscn.org/downloads/news/minister-for-children-and-young-people-and-keeping-the-promise-letter-from-soscn-september-2023.pdf>

Cabinet Secretary for Education Letter

After the anti-poverty round table, the Policy and Research Manager wrote to the Cabinet Secretary for Education, Jenny Gilruth MSP.

<https://soscn.org/downloads/news/letter-to-jenny-gilruth-cabinet-secretary-for-education-and-skills.pdf>

The School Age Childcare Team produced a Q& A Sheet in response to our concerns:

<https://soscn.org/downloads/news/pfg-school-age-childcare-information-q-and-a.pdf>

## Research

### Limited or lack of school age childcare parents and carer impact survey

<https://soscn.org/downloads/reports/limited-or-lack-of-sac-parent-carer-impact-survey.pdf>

### Annual Workforce Survey

<https://soscn.org/downloads/research/osc-worforce-survey-results-2022.pdf>

### Care Inspectorate Survey results

<https://soscn.org/downloads/reports/careinspectorate-inspections-survey-esults.pdf>

### Draft Common Core Survey April 2024

SOSCN hosted and analysed results re draft revised "The Common Core: Shared Values and Knowledge for everyone who works with children and young people in Scotland" (on behalf of the Common Core Stakeholder Group and Scottish Government).

## Training and Events

### May 2023. Shared inspection framework - Engagement Session

Consultation event in partnership with Care Inspectorate and Education Scotland on new shared inspection framework.

### June 2023. Play and Leisure in Australian Out of School Hours Services

In-person learning session about play and practice in Australian school age childcare settings.

*"Thank you so much for all the information from the course I attended on Monday. The course content was absolutely inspirational, and Professor Cartmel and Kylie's presentations were so informative and relevant to my working role. I can't thank you enough for such a great course."*

### June 2023. Get Ready for Summer

In-person session that introduced attendees to a variety of different games which could be delivered and adapted for summer fun.

*"I really enjoyed this session; it's given me more to think about for this summer's activity plans."*

*"I am going to take this content back to my colleagues, interesting topics. The summer resource is great, we will be using this throughout our summer holiday club."*

### November 2023. Let's get together to talk about school age childcare

6 in-person networking sessions held across the country held in partnership with Scottish Government. In total, there were 151 participants representing 9,093 children and 7,971 families.

*"Really good and useful information about what's upcoming in the future in terms of training opportunities."*



*"It was really informative and insightful."*

A SOSCN Online Training participant



*"The day went really well, found it such a shame that there are services out there that are in such financial crisis."*

*"Great to have these discussions in a more local setting."*

*"I found the event very informative and enjoyed the format."*

### **December 2023. Autism: What does each child want you to know?**

In-person event with renowned expert, Jim Taylor.

### **January 2024. Safer Staffing Legislation Webinar**

Online engagement event held in partnership with the Care Inspectorate.

### **March 2024. In-person Play Training**

5 in-person sessions held across the country and delivered by SOSCN's new Practice and Training Officer, Patrick Morrison.

*"Was a really enjoyable, fun session which has given me a better insight into play and the benefits and how I can implement into our setting."*

*"The expectations of this course were met. I thought it was very well explained and gave me a lot more knowledge around play."*

*"Patrick was fantastic at explaining the different studies that explored the importance of play."*

### **Summer, Easter, and October Holiday Football Coaching**

Greig delivered 12 football coaching sessions directly to children in school age childcare services.

Feedback from staff:

*"Such a great session, the interaction with the kids was brilliant; all the kids paid attention and you could see just how much the kids were enjoying themselves. Greig was so patient and encouraging and gave direction really well. Everyone who took part had the best time."*

*"The football session was great. Splitting into groups for the younger/older group worked really well. The kids understood all the instructions and had fun. It promoted social independence and helped the kids mix with others in their age group that they hadn't played along with before. The one-hour sessions for each group were enough time to keep their focus especially for the younger group."*

Feedback from children:

*"I had such a great time and can we do that again."*

*"I want to go back to the pitch to do that again."*

*"That was brilliant."*

## New Practice and Training Officer Post

The Board and senior staff team worked on a development and strategic plan in early summer to deliver more practical support to the sector, and to increase our sustainability. We advertised and recruited for a new post of Practice and Training Officer over summer 2023. Given that we have only three full-time and one very part time staff, we recognised we needed to increase our capacity and bring in new skills to develop new resources.

We appointed Patrick Morrison to the post in September 2023. Following an intense induction period which included surveying the sector on staff training needs, as well as looking at good practice, he has developed a delivered a range of useful resources and training courses, both in person and online.

## Online Training Platform

SOSCN developed a new online training platform that was launched in March 2024. The platform aims to develop or refresh your understanding and enhance your skills in a range of subjects that you can put into practice, to help you deliver the best play and wellbeing outcomes for the children in your services.

## Online Shop

An online shop was developed and was launched in March 2024 with a range of toolkits and sample policies and procedures, all tailored for the school age childcare sector.

## Practice Focus Features

A new feature that focusses on best practice in specific topics was developed by Patrick. Patrick visits services and interviews them while taking photos or short films to illustrate best practice, and moreover, how this related to Care Inspectorate inspections.

*“Great to have the opportunity to meet in person again. We have come away with another lovely person to network with which is always a bonus.”*

A SOSCN In-Person Training participant

## Achieving Quality Scotland

This is our Quality Improvement Framework resource which is designed to help services improve their practice by requiring them to produce evidence to meet a set of quality standards. To help them do this we provide mentoring and training over the course of the two years they have to complete the process. This is paid-for work and Glasgow City Council purchased it for a group of Glasgow services pre pandemic; this was restarted last year.

We have held six mentoring sessions with the services working towards Achieving Quality Scotland, and this includes the UNCRC, and Getting it Right for Every Child.

## Online developments and social media

The website received over 7,500 users with over 10,400 sessions.

Our Facebook increased from 1,500 to 1,583 followers.

X (formally known as Twitter) now has 2,283 followers.

We sent out over 50 information emails including Bumper newsletters for Summer 2023, Winter 2023 and Spring 2024.

## Professional Advisers

Independent Examiner: Alexander Sloan & Co., 180 St Vincent Street, Glasgow Bank: Bank of Scotland, Argyle Street, Glasgow

## Funders

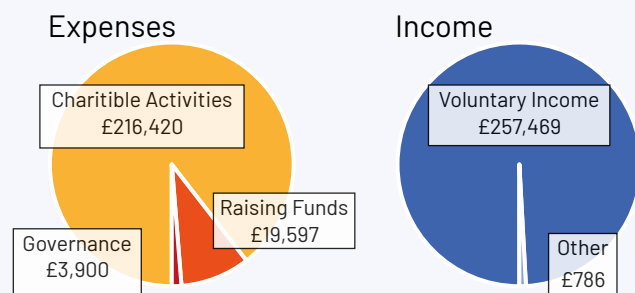
Children, Young People and Families Early Intervention Fund core grant administered by CORRA Foundation

Scottish Government Childcare Sector Representation and Sustainability Fund



## Financial Report

Extracted from examined accounts 2023-2024, prepared by Alexander Sloan & Co.



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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