

## Scottish Out of School Care Network: Briefing for round table discussion

### *Poverty and Inequality Commission: Holiday Care and Out of School Care (September 2018)*

The Scottish Government Child Poverty Action Plan, *Every Child, Every Chance*, March 2018<sup>1</sup> includes development of out of school care in actions that need to be taken to address child poverty and disadvantage. The Scottish Government is committed to producing a national policy framework for out of school care for consultation in the coming year.<sup>2</sup> The Scottish Out of School Care Network (SOSCN) is a member of End Child Poverty UK and the alleviation of child poverty is one of our founding principles. Please go to our website to find out more about us.

There are 1029 out of school care services in Scotland, for 739 this is their main service. There are also 626 breakfast clubs and 599 holiday services.<sup>3</sup> This is data on services registered with the Care Inspectorate and they must meet all quality, safety and wellbeing standards. Staff must meet qualifications and standards through registration with the Scottish Social Services Council; including a degree level Childhood Practice qualification for managers.

Currently nearly 80,000 children use out of school care<sup>4</sup> from a population of 401,000 primary school children<sup>5</sup>, so at present nearly 20% access out of school care (including around 4.5% who go to childminders). The percentage who attends group services is just over 15% of primary school children. Those services running food and activities support for children and families which run for less than a set time do not have to register with the Care Inspectorate, and are not in the statistics, so it is hard to quantify such services. However, others integrate existing registered provision with these additional support services. Two examples from our case studies demonstrate this (SOSCN, 2018, ongoing):

Fife council provide free breakfast clubs throughout the year and use their existing registered out of school and holiday clubs to provide integrated places and food for disadvantaged children, also, in areas where the majority of children are disadvantaged, they open registered and regulated holiday clubs which are free for them and include food, are also open to families who can afford to pay; therefore once again seamlessly integrating provision. Families are also given weekend packs of food. They use an innovative range of support from retailers and charities to enable all of this.

T.A.S.C. based in St Ninians Primary in Glasgow were successfully awarded funding through the Voluntary Action Fund: Glasgow Children's Summer Food Programme 2018. The service has been

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/Resource/0053/00533606.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://beta.gov.scot/publications/delivering-today-investing-tomorrow-governments-programme-scotland-2018-19/pages/8/>

<sup>3</sup> Childcare Statistics 2016 (Care Inspectorate, 2017)

<sup>4</sup> Ibid

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/archive/statistics/TrendPupilNumbers>

operating over summer for a couple of hours, 4 days a week, to provide lunch and family activities to local residents. With the help of social media, the initiative has become very well used and exceeded expectations, so much so that due to the demand they extended the initial 4-week period for an extra week. This was run alongside and part of their long term holiday service.

The contribution of out of school care, breakfast and holiday clubs to addressing poverty and inequality has been determined by research over many years. The early years of research focused on the impact on parents, by enabling them to work or study and this still has a positive impact despite the fact that in the current climate work does not necessarily lift families out of poverty. The European Foundation for Living and Working Conditions, *Out of School Care Services for Children Living in Disadvantaged Areas, (2007<sup>6</sup>)*, looked at the range and benefits of such services across 6 European member states, including the UK, found that out of school care:

- “Helps tackle the negative effects of social and demographic change
- Has an important role to play in addressing the range of issues in disadvantaged areas including being a first step in engaging the most excluded people
- By widening the pool of available workers... it benefits workers, increases female participation in the labour market, enhances women’s career development, reduces the stress of workers and provides employment in disadvantaged areas
- Helps governments meet a range of goals: poverty reduction, educational attainment, economic development, social inclusion, community safety, health improvement, greater equality and the reconciliation of work and family “ (p.9)

The researchers also warned that such services in, or for, disadvantaged communities had to be well subsidised, of good quality, affordable and accessible and worked best as part of a national strategy to provide such services. The positive impact on disadvantaged families is still high today, as evident in this quote from a parent from the current SOSCN parent survey 2018 (ongoing).

“I cannot thank x-service enough for supporting me and my family. As a single mother who has been homeless and moved so many times with no support networks and no family to help x-service were there to help me. Taking my children and helping them to adjust is the reason that I felt I could then go further in my studies and I now attend university. I have now managed for the first time in my 20 years of being on my own to build support networks and stay in a house. My family are thriving and I couldn’t have done this without x-service being so flexible and supportive in helping my children adapt and adjust. I also know that my children feel safe and connected enough that they would go to x-service staff if there was something really troubling them. That for me is a huge support where I feel less on my own and I cannot say ‘thank you’ enough.”

---

<sup>6</sup> [https://soscn.org/downloads/library/Out\\_of\\_School\\_Care/OSC\\_for\\_children\\_living\\_in\\_disadvantaged\\_areas.pdf](https://soscn.org/downloads/library/Out_of_School_Care/OSC_for_children_living_in_disadvantaged_areas.pdf)

In SOSCN ongoing Children's Survey 2018, e.g. one child said the thing he liked best about out of school care was: "*Believing you Matter*". While this is important for everyone; it is especially the case for children experiencing the stresses of poverty.

Out of school care can have a positive effect on children's learning and attainment, none more so than for children from the most disadvantaged backgrounds. Tanner et al (2016)<sup>7</sup> in their research found that among disadvantaged children, of those who attended after school clubs (activity clubs and care services) there was a significant correspondence with higher educational school attainment and prosocial skills than for those who did not.

This change may be because the economically disadvantaged children were accessing additional opportunities and experiences that ordinarily would not be available to them (but which wealthier children are more likely to take for granted) therefore, out of school care club and services are able to reduce the opportunity, wealth and attainment gaps in society. Holiday services are able to organise whole days out, trips to the seaside or galleries and farms and museums etc.; for some children this may be their first or only opportunities for such experiences.

Despite the availability of financial support to parents to help pay for children through the UK government "Tax free childcare" scheme, childcare tax credits or within universal credit, conditionality on working hours and problems with accessing such support are problematic for some families. The most disadvantaged children of unemployed parents can only access out of school and holiday clubs if the place is fully subsidised for them. Yet, these are precisely the children and families who would benefit the most.

In Scotland there is no statutory duty and specific funding to provide out of school and holiday care and breakfast clubs. Under the 1995 Children Act (Scotland), there is a statutory duty on local authorities to provide daycare for school age children in need, before and after school and during holidays, but this is not recorded or monitored. 260,000 children experience relative child poverty in Scotland<sup>8</sup>; that is one in four of the overall child population; therefore if we apply this ratio to the 401,000 primary school population<sup>9</sup>, this works out at potentially 100,000 children who may need this type of support.

The evidence shows that the provision of out of school care, holiday and breakfast clubs makes a positive difference for children experiencing poverty and disadvantage, therefore investing in services for such children should be a priority and given immediate support, within the wider national out of school care strategic policy framework currently in development.

---

<sup>7</sup> Out of school activities during primary school and KS2 attainment  
Jenny Chanfreau; Emily Tanner; Meg Callanan; Karen Laing; Amy Skipp; Liz Todd  
**Centre for Longitudinal Studies | 2016**  
[download](#)

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Social-Welfare/IncomePoverty/CPBillInfographic>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/archive/statistics/TrendPupilNumbers>