

SCHOOL AGE CHILDCARE POLICY OVERVIEW – DECEMBER 2022

There are a number of national discussions and consultations happening at the moment which will have an impact, either directly or indirectly, on out of school care. Some of these are specifically around workforce issues as well as the wider expansion of the school age childcare sector, whilst others are wider-reaching conversations about the future of education in Scotland and the regulation of the social care sector.

We aim to participate in as many of these discussions as possible, either by submitting evidence and consultation responses, or by attending both on-line and in-person groups, to ensure that out of school care is represented. Current groups we are part of include: Childcare Sector Working Group; SSSC Future Proofing Programme – Codes of Practice Review Working Group; SSSC Review of the Common Core of Skills, Knowledge and Understanding and Values for the “Children’s Workforce” in Scotland, and Strategic Framework for Scotland’s Childcare Workforce – Steering Group.

You will find below an update on some of our policy work; the Scottish Government’s work towards the planned expansion of school-age childcare via the Minister for Children and Young People’s speech at our recent conference, and two consultations with closing dates in December.

SOSCN School Age Childcare Discussion Papers

We have recently produced three discussion papers focussing on different important topics relating to the delivery of school age childcare; for each of the subject areas they highlight issues which need to be addressed as well as possible solutions. These papers have already been shared with government, as well as other national bodies and agencies. Please feel free to share.

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>

OSC Sector Workforce Survey 2022

For our policy work we need to have up-to-date information so that we can accurately represent the sector, and our annual workforce survey is one of the main ways in which we gather this much-needed information. Our 2022 workforce survey is now open and will close on Friday 20th January 2023. The survey can be completed by Lead Practitioners, Practitioners and Support Workers and we ask that you encourage your staff to participate in this survey.

The survey can be completed online:

<https://freeonlinesurveys.com/s/w989fQIQ/i/0>

Alternatively, SOSCN members will soon receive paper copies of the survey (alongside your 2023 wall planner) which can be completed and returned to our offices.

Key Points from Minister for Children and Young People's Speech at SOSCN Conference on 8th November.

Speech Summary – Ms Haughey, Minister for Children and Young People

- Ms Haughey expressed gratitude to the school age childcare (SACC) sector for their commitment and dedication and acknowledged the challenges they have faced.
- She emphasised the importance of having reliable, accessible, and flexible childcare, highlighting both the heightened risk of poverty and increased barriers to accessing childcare (and by extension employment, training and respite), faced by some families.
- She reiterated the commitment made in last year's Programme for Government (PfG) to build a system of SACC, free for those on the lowest incomes, and in this year's PfG the commitment to support families by investing £20 million in the design of that all-year-round school-age childcare system.

Access to Childcare Fund (ACF)

- Highlighted the investment of £2 million in 15 pilot projects through the ACF over the last two years to test innovative models of delivering SACC for families most at risk of living in poverty, the continuing financial support for 8 of the projects and 2 additional pilot projects this year, and the evaluation published in October 2022.

Community Tests of Change

- Outlined the approach we are taking through community tests of change, building on the learning from the ACF and beginning work in a small number of disadvantaged communities to better understand and deliver the services families require to meet their needs.

Children's Charter and People Panel

- Highlighted the work being undertaken with children in diverse communities to co-create a Children's Charter for school age childcare in Scotland. Children will create local charters for school age childcare in their communities and collaborate to create a national Children's Charter as an articulation of their rights, needs and aspirations from school age childcare. This will be published in early 2023.
- Highlighted the co-design and discovery work undertaken this year with parents, carers and providers under the banner of the People Panel. This project has engaged parents and carers from different communities to learn more deeply about the barriers they experience in accessing school age childcare.

SACC Delivery Framework

- Confirmed the publication of a SACC Delivery Framework by the end of this year. This framework follows the publication of our Strategic Childcare Plan which sets out the strategic direction for all our childcare commitments.
- It will set out the principles that we will apply to designing and building a new system of SACC. It will outline our person-centred and place-based design approaches.

National Discussion Scottish Education – closing date 5th December 2022

People are invited to participate in a survey about a national discussion about the future of education in Scotland:

<https://consult.gov.scot/national-discussion-scottish-education/>

Independent Review of Inspection, Scrutiny and Regulation (IRISR): call for evidence – closing date 23rd December 2022

The Call for Evidence is looking for people's written views on how they think inspection and regulation can ensure social care support services can continually improve now and in the future:

<https://consult.gov.scot/health-and-social-care/inspection-scrutiny-and-regulation-of-social-care/>