



## Scottish Out of School Care Network's response to Care Inspectorate's review of "Space to Grow"

December 2023

### **2. Please tell us about three aspects of the existing resource you feel are important to keep.**

The case studies are very useful, although of course they should be updated and also include school age childcare and shared, multi-use premises.

The overall document is well-structured and easy to read- can jump to relevant points without having to read the whole document to find what you might be looking for.

Importance of staff training.

### **3. Please tell us about any section/detail of the existing resource you feel should be enhanced. You may wish to consider taking account of the learning from the Covid-19, the expansion of early learning and childcare or any other factor.**

The voice of children and what they want from their spaces and environments needs to be not only promoted but clearly shown as to how they can affect change in the design of spaces, either temporarily or permanently.

There needs to be greater consideration, case studies, examples and prompt questions as to how premises and environments can truly meet the needs of children with disabilities and ASN- all services (ELC as well as school age childcare) are currently struggling to meet the needs of these children.

Positives from COVID would be learning around importance/benefits of hand washing facilities in terms of general infection and prevention control, and also the importance of developing outdoor spaces/environments to make outdoor activities and play more attractive and enticing to children and staff, regardless of weather etc. Examples should include how more can be made of outdoor urban settings and playgrounds where there is possibly limited access to green spaces, and mostly tarmac/paved spaces.

The case studies and examples would be significantly enhanced if there were also videos available which includes the voices and feedback from children themselves. (Whilst publications are necessary, increasingly, people are accessing information through audio and visual means- publications and guidance need to be enhanced by other formats and ways of presenting information.)

### **4. Please tell us about three key areas, other than previously stated, the reviewed resource should include.**

From an out of school care perspective there is very little specific reference to out of school care: no case study examples and the document focusses primarily on purpose-built premises or services which have their own individual premises, and therefore control over them. Although this is relevant to a very small minority of out of school care services, the vast majority are located within schools, community centres, or village halls and therefore have very little control over premises and limited ability to change/develop/adapt environments as they are in fact multi-use shared venues.

The revised document must take into account that the majority of out of school care services are based within shared premises (as are some ELC settings e.g. playgroups, voluntary nurseries) and therefore the 'ideal' may not be possible and therefore a proportionate expectation of premises



should be promoted. Perhaps instead of a 'blanket' approach to environments the document could be split into- 'own premises' and 'shared premises'.

The document needs to make mention and be cognisant of the Scottish Government's commitment to expanding school age childcare; to meet this future demand new spaces and environments will potentially need to be utilised and Space to Grow requirements should not reduce the potential for new and innovative spaces to be registered.

Since school age childcare services are often based within school premises which are suitable for children during the school day, there must be greater consideration as to how school guidance aligns with Care Inspectorate guidance and vice versa- same premises and same children, and although a different service, there needs to be greater consideration of how these two systems can come together.

It would be useful to include some low-cost suggestions, or a full low cost section, on how to improve space and environments. Many services are struggling financially, and do not have the means to implement changes that they would like. However, if there were some low-cost alternatives that can make a big impact, it would be inclusive for more services.