

Winter 2024 Newsletter



Scottish Out of School Care Network

Welcome to our newsletter for the winter of 2024. For this year we have pulled together news of the various new resources and training we have available, and we thank the SSSC and the Care Inspectorate for providing useful articles on what is happening and what to expect in the future from them. Patrick gives feedback on how his recent training has been welcomed and pulls together all the practice updates he has developed this year.

We share links for the interesting and informative videos on various aspects of good practice and thank you to all the services and participants for sharing their ideas and demonstrating happy children playing and having fun!

Finlay has pulled together some idea for seasonal crafts for your children and do please send us any feedback on how they worked out, if you have a go at any of them.

So, take a wee break and scroll through and remember to share with your whole staff team, and committees or boards too.

Irene Audain, Chief Executive, SOSCN



Members' Stories

A series of short films each looking at a different aspect of partnership working with your local community.

In September we held our annual conference, titled: Reaching Out! Growing your community presence. We had some fantastic speakers who shared their experiences and practice of working with their local and wider community. We also created some video presentations to help generate discussion between delegates. We hope you like the videos, and we are very grateful to all the staff, parents, and children for allowing SOSCEN to come and make them. If you are interested in SOSCEN coming to your service, then please just get in touch.

First up was Building Relationships in the School Community, filmed at St Mirins Out of School Club in the south side of Glasgow.

On our first visit, we spoke with Margaret McLelland, the long serving Head of Service at St Mirins, alongside Manager, Patricia Kelly. They shared the importance of creating positive relationships with all members of the school community to create levels of mutual respect for each other's value that is brought to the school community.

We also spoke with the headteacher of St Mirins Primary School, Miss Wilson, who understood the importance of the out of school club for children, parents and families, but also for the school itself. This was echoed by class teacher, and parent of a child that attends the out of school club, Mrs Reid.

We went back a couple of weeks later, at the start of the school term to squeeze in some filming between the August rain showers of the children playing in a wide variety of play spaces and play types. They didn't seem to care if it was raining, right enough!

You can watch the short film on YouTube here:

Building Relationships in the School Community (St Mirins Out of School Club)

<https://youtu.be/Bu5YrgRlo9s>

The next video presentation was Getting Involved in the Business Community as a SAC Service. For this short film, we travelled to Renfrewshire to speak with Lesley Compton, Childcare Manager at KLAS Care.

Lesley shared her story of starting the service in 2010 with business partner Kirsty, and how it has grown into multiple services looking after 500 children. Much of this, she puts down to her involvement in local community, and in particular, getting involved with the business community.

Through her own drive and support from her business mentor, the service has successfully gained funding and grants from multiple avenues, some of which helped build their very own, purpose-built premises.

Lesley is now a business mentor to others, and is still full of energy and enthusiasm to continue developing projects that support the local community.

You can watch the short film on YouTube here:

Getting Involved in the Business Community as a SAC Service (KLAS Care CiC)

<https://youtu.be/2UA0pE30SI4>

Last up was our video filmed at Hutchesons' After School Care, Working Together with Other SAC Services. During their summer holiday club, the service organised a Euros football tournament, inviting several other school age childcare services along to take part in the festivities. It wasn't only football that was on offer though, there was a cheerleading event, arts and crafts, a flag parade, food, and much more!

We went back a few weeks after the busy day to chat with Manager Jackie Thomson and Lead Practitioner Pamela MacKinnon, to discuss the planning of the day, the benefits that came from working with other services, and their plans for similar community events in the future.

An incredible effort went into organising the event, but it was clear to Jackie and Pamela that it was well worth it. And most importantly, it was clear to see the children had a fantastic time!

You can watch the short film on YouTube here:

Working Together with Other SAC Services (Hutchesons' ASC Football Tournament)

https://youtu.be/nBxK2IjzF_8

What's It Like? - Members Videos

Patrick has also started a video series called *What's it Like?* where we visit different school age childcare services to learn about the variety in types of services our members are providing. The first two videos in this series have looked at what's it like in a rural setting, and also what's it like in an outdoor setting. You can see these videos at the links below.

What's it Like in at Outdoor Setting? WILD Wooldand Learning Visit

Watch on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/GO4ioMAnGCY>

What's it Like at a Rural Setting? Muthill Kiddy Club Visit

Watch on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/H90ZHIxVHc4>

Quality Improvement Framework for Early Learning and Childcare

Partners' article from Care Inspectorate and Education Scotland



Education Scotland and the Care Inspectorate have worked together to develop a Quality Improvement Framework for Early Learning and Childcare sectors.

Stakeholder engagement has been a key feature throughout the development of the quality improvement framework. The framework has been developed with the sector, the stakeholder reference group and professional experts. The initial consultation period saw 854 people engaging directly with us and 288 online survey responses.

The Care Inspectorate and Education Scotland used the feedback to develop a draft version of the framework that we shared in November 2023. We again sought feedback and received a high number of responses (649). Your feedback was again taken into account when developing the final version of the framework in collaboration with our stakeholder reference group.

Thank you for your contributions during these consultation periods and helping us to develop the final framework. Since then, we have worked to respond to your views and to provide clarity, consistency and a common language to support self-evaluation and inspection of ELC. The new framework is more streamlined with fewer quality indicators, which in turn will reduce the burden on settings. We also took on board the unanimous ask for sector specific content and have developed a section specifically for school-aged childcare. There are specific quality indicators, which focus on the unique role you play. We hope you were able to attend one of our recent engagement sessions - we were delighted to share information on the framework with so many people and look forward to continued engagement with you.

The framework will be released on 14 January 2025. Following this, we will host more engagement sessions to prepare you for full implementation of the new framework from September 2025.

We continue to use our existing frameworks for inspection until September 2025. We will pilot the use of the new framework for inspection in some settings between late January and March 2025. Further information about this will be provided in due course.

A time of change at the SSSC

Partners' article from the
Scottish Social Services
Council

TIME
FOR
CHANGE



Scottish Social
Services Council

Maree Allison was appointed Chief Executive of the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) in July, just a short time after changes to registration and the Codes of Practice. She's looking forward to working with out of school care registrants and employers.

This year has been a time of change at the SSSC, with revised Codes of Practice, changes to registration, qualifications and skills and my appointment in July, after a time as Interim Chief Executive.

Change

We introduced updated Codes of Practice in May and then changes to our Register and approach to qualifications and skills as part of our Future Proofing Programme came into effect at the start of June.

I hope that you will see a much more straightforward registration process, and that you will find our new approach to continuous professional learning (CPL) better supports you in your role and stage of career.

We developed the new CPL in partnership with the sector and made sure the core learning elements can be mapped to the qualifications required for registration. You'll find our CPL website here <https://learn.sssc.uk.com/cpl/>

Another change was the new requirement that people joining the workforce must apply for registration within three months and be registered within six months. We've got resources and information on our website for employers to help them share this message as part of the SSSC registered campaign to get people registered in time. <https://www.sssc.uk.com/registration/sssc-registered/>

Revised Codes of Practice

Our revised SSSC Codes of Practice for Social Service Workers and Employers (the Codes) come into effect on 1 May 2024. The Codes are available to read on our website in a range of languages and formats, including a BSL video.

We are interested to find out how you are raising awareness of our revised Codes to support you and your team. Maybe you have posters in your staff room, are holding training sessions, providing staff with pocket sized Codes or have put information on your intranet. Whatever you are doing, let us know by emailing communications@sssc.uk.com

You can access resources for the Codes of Practice at <https://www.sssc.uk.com/codes>

Qualifications

Since the Register changes in June, we take a more flexible approach to qualifications for registration to allow people to move between children and young people services and social care without having to gain two different qualifications.

The standard qualification for workers in children's services is the SVQ Social Services (Children and Young People) and for workers in adult services it's the SVQ Social Services and Healthcare. We'll now accept either of these qualifications for registrants working in both children's and adult services.

Registrants moving to another type of service must complete additional, specific learning as part of their CPL to ensure they develop the necessary skills and expertise in working with children.

People who are new to the Register who don't already hold the required qualification now have three years to complete it. This doesn't affect people registered before 3 June 2024, who still have the same time as before.

Any new registrant who is registered as a supervisor, manager or residential childcare worker with no recognised qualification will still have five years.

Portal to support your CPL

We host the Continuous Professional Learning (CPL) portal for the Children and Young People Workforce which offers easy access to a wide range of learning options.

The portal supports the early learning and school age childcare workforce and their employers with their professional development by listing training providers and learning opportunities available in one directory, alongside national online modules and an induction resource.

We're planning more improvements to the portal this year to make it easier for you to find relevant learning. Visit it here <https://cpldirectory.elc.sssc.uk.com/>

SOSCN would like to take the opportunity to welcome Maree Allison to her post as Chief Executive of the SSSC and look forward to continuing the productive partnership work for the school age childcare sector.

Key UK Budget announcements update November 2024



National Living Wage and National Minimum Wage

The government has announced increased rates of the National Living Wage (NLW) and National Minimum Wage (NMW) which will come into force from 1 April 2025.

The rates which will apply are as follows:

- NLW From 1 April 2025 £12.21 for aged over 21
- For ages 18-20 £10.00
- 16-17 £7.55
- Apprentices £7.55

The apprenticeship rate applies to apprentices under 19 or 19 and over in the first year of apprenticeship.

National Insurance contributions

Employees and NICs from 6 April 2024, the main rate of Class 1 employee NICs is 8%. The employer rate is 13.8%.

The government announced that it will increase the employer rate from 13.8% to 15% from 6 April 2025.

The Secondary Threshold is the point at which employers become liable to pay NICs on an individual employee's earnings and is currently set at £9,100 a year.

The government will reduce the Secondary Threshold to £5,000 a year from 6 April 2025 until 6 April 2028, and then increase it by Consumer Price Index (CPI) thereafter.

The Employment Allowance currently allows businesses with employer NICs bills of £100,000 or less in the previous tax year to deduct £5,000 from their employer NICs bill.

Find out how to claim this here: [Employment Allowance: What you'll get - GOV.UK](#)

From 6 April 2025 the government will increase the Employment Allowance from £5,000 to £10,500, and remove the £100,000 threshold for eligibility, expanding this to all eligible employers with employer NIC bills.

So for those of you who are bigger charities or businesses who currently pay more than £100,000 in your NIC bill, or if the increase in NI brings this in next April for you, it is important to know that you can claim £10,000 of this back each year. This applies only to a single payroll – there is more guidance here if you have more than one payroll.

Find out more here: [Employment Allowance: Check if you're eligible - GOV.UK](#)

Although increased funding to provide breakfast clubs and childcare was also announced, it is important to note that this was for England only. This is an issue devolved to the Scottish Government.

Out of School Care Workforce Survey

Please remember our workforce survey if you have not already responded to this. Please also feel free to forward this on to any members of staff from your service. And a big thank to all who have taken part already. Full details below:

<https://freeonlinesurveys.com/s/zGr85X1y>



Flu Vaccine eligibility for the Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) profession

Like teachers, ELC staff are not eligible for flu vaccination this winter as a whole group in their own right. However, some ELC staff may be eligible for flu vaccination by virtue of who they care for. If ELC staff have children in their care who are clinically vulnerable, then this would qualify them for flu vaccination as a frontline health and social care worker. A child would be considered clinically vulnerable if they had certain conditions such as:

A chronic disease of the respiratory system, heart, kidney, liver or a chronic neurological disease; Diabetes; A weakened immune system (immunosuppressed); Asplenia or dysfunction of the spleen; Morbid obesity. More details here: [Flu vaccine | NHS inform](#)

If anyone working in childcare, feels that they meet the criteria above, you can book via the online portal at [Winter vaccines | NHS inform](#). When you log in, identify yourself as a 'frontline health & social care worker'. Alternatively you can book via the national vaccination helpline on 0800 030 8013. It's open from 9am to 6pm Monday to Friday, and from 9am to 1pm on Saturday. On the call identify yourself as a 'frontline health & social care worker'.

At the vaccination clinic you may be asked questions around your eligibility. Identify yourself as a 'frontline health & social care worker' and if asked further, note that you care for clinically vulnerable children through your work.

SOSCN Training Recap

In November and early December this year we held 6 training sessions across Scotland, on the subject of Managing Distressed Behaviour with Trauma Informed Practice.

Across the session, over 120 participants took part in developing and refreshing their knowledge of trauma and adverse childhood experiences, with deep discussion and reflection on how this may be impacting the children at their services.

The goal of the session was to empower and encourage workers to implement a trauma informed approach in their practice, with a particular focus on how, as individuals and collectively as a sector, we can approach managing children's distressing behaviour with empathy, understanding and patience.

Thank you to all those who attended, for your enthusiasm and contributions, and we hope you have felt inspired to fly the flag for trauma informed practice!

Be sure to follow our Eventbrite page to keep up to date with training sessions and other events being hosted by SOSCN:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/scottish-out-of-school-care-network-17445968872>

We can also deliver training at your at your service or childcare forum. To enquire about training, please contact patrick@soscn.org

We currently provide training in subjects such as:

- Play
- Child Protection
- Medication Management
- GIRFEC and SHANARRI
- Managing Distressing Behaviour with Trauma Informed Practice
- Staff Induction to School Age Childcare/ Out of School Care



Inspection Round-Up: 2024 Recap



We started the year looking at **Medication Management**.

We discussed labelling, storage, record keeping, and auditing.

Click here to check out the [Medication Management Inspection Round-Up video](#).



Snack Time was up next.

We discussed children's independence at snack time, creating a relaxed and social snack experience, and consulting children with menus.

Click here to check out the [Snack Time Inspection Round-Up video](#).



Experiences for Older Children then followed.

We discussed activities, providing opportunities for responsibility, and creating spaces specifically for older children.

Click here to check out the [Experiences for Older Children Inspection Round-Up video](#).



Next, we looked at **Health & Safety**.

We discussed playground security, involving children in risk assessing and core training subjects.

Click here to check out the [Health & Safety Inspection Round-Up video](#).



Then it was **Communication & Engagement with Parents & Carers**.

We discussed keeping parents & carers up-to-date and informed, seeking feedback, and inviting parents & carers into your setting.

Click here to check out the [Communication & Engagement with Parents & Carers Inspection Round-Up video](#).



Lastly, we covered **Service Environment**.

We discussed general environment and atmosphere of settings, different play spaces and resources on offer, and toilets.

Click here to check out the [Service Environment Inspection Round-Up video](#).

SOSCN Online Developments



Online Training

This year we were delighted to launch our new online training platform that went live in March 2024. Many of you have signed up already and we hope you have been enjoying the courses. 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. We currently have course in Induction for New Workers to School Age Childcare; Medication Management; and Play – What, Why, and How.

To register for these, please see this link: <https://soscnlearn.online/>

If you wish to bulk-buy courses for your staff, please get in touch at the email: info@soscnlearn.online

Online Shop

We also opened our online shop earlier this year. This launched in March 2024 with a range of toolkits and sample policies and procedures, all tailored for the school age childcare sector. These have been selling well and we hope you have been having success integrating these into your service's policies and standards. Look out for more products in the new year.

Visit the shop here: <https://soscn.org/shop>

End Child Poverty Coalition

The government are due to publish an ambitious Child Poverty Strategy in Spring 2025. As part of the End Child Poverty Coalition, we are setting out eight key areas which we will test the strategy against when it is published. The tests represent the shared view of all 120 members of the coalition, and are based on our collective insights from the children and families we work with who are living in poverty, as well as conversations with frontline professionals. The strategy must meet all eight tests if it is to deliver on ending child poverty in this country.

https://endchildpoverty.org.uk/8_tests/

Practical Activities Ideas

Please see the links below for some Christmas craft ideas, most of these will take you to YouTube. Please note, SOSCN takes no responsibility for the content of external links or the products that these videos may advertise or endorse.

Sock Snowman

This is an easy Christmas craft idea that requires you to cut up a white sock, so you will need to source these in advance. The finished snowman will make a great present for friends or family.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mlOieRRVBm0>

Paper Lanterns

You will most likely be familiar with making these. But if you need to refresh your ideas for how they can be given a Christmas twist, then this video shows you the steps to take.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vZbZynMINCg>

Toilet Paper Roll Craft

Classic Christmas craft with the old favourite and easily sourced materials.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TA3XngmqS18>



Woolly Hat Decoration

This video has 6 ideas, but the first one is making a mini woolly hat that can be used to decorate the tree. Maybe a bit more time consuming than other activities, but the results are great.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N_yH7LhWprs



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DIY Nativity Stones

This activity might need to be done over a few days, or perhaps divided up amongst the children to make a fantastic Christmas display for the service. This one is probably easier with the fancy pens that are used, but can also be achieved with paint.

<https://rainydaymum.co.uk/diy-nativity-story-stones/>



Hanging Branch Tree

A few more complicated ideas in this video, but the first idea looks like a nice and easy one that would also mean getting out and about in the winter weather, and result in a nice decoration for the service.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IPg8dOP3zKM>



Fancy Paper Snowflake

And here we are with the old favourite. Although this version looks like it has taken it to the next level, so maybe not for everyone.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CvkmNjCWY3M>



Thank you for reading.
Please get in touch
if you have any
comments or would
like to find out more
about anything in this
newsletter.



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