

Out of School Care - Views from the field

Report on consultation events with out of school care service staff across Scotland



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Introduction:

From December 2014 to May 2015 SOSCN held a series of training, networking and consultation events with out of school care service staff across the country. The collated responses below are from around one hundred out of school care professionals who attended the events held in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Stirling, North Lanarkshire, Highland and Argyll and Bute. The consultation questions were in a similar format for each event, the method included “shout out questions” and flip chart posters on the walls in different parts of the room with the 4 main headline questions, therefore people were able to respond in a large group, small groups or as individuals.

The questions covered were:

- Issues (local and national) – Introduction whole group discussion
- Solutions to issues raised – Introduction whole group discussion NB there were few or no suggestions here from the floor.

Flip chart paper posters, small groups, individuals and whole group feedback in plenary discussion:

#1 Why is OSC important? What would you tell national government about OSC?

#2 How do you improve the lives of children (and how can you prove that)?

#3 In what way are you a community asset?

#4 How do you/could provide you better support families?

In the plenary discussions we also sought some feedback on our own role

Why do you need a national organisation? What would be the impact if SOSCN wasn't here?

We also provided another flip chart poster for other issues we were not focusing on in the consultation, especially those around SSSC registrations, qualifications requirements and Care Inspections as these topics often tend to dominate networking meetings of out of school care services. We wanted clearer national policy guidance from them and for services to think about how to demonstrate their positive impact on children, families and communities.

The summary results on pages 4 to 10 show that staff clearly believe their work supports children's rights and their overall development and wellbeing. They believe they are community assets providing valuable support to families. In terms of a national policy for out of school care they see funding, inclusion, premises, professional status and professional communication as vital elements. Services also are willing, if resourced; to extend support to families in many different ways and indeed many do so already. The appendix from page 11 to 24 gives more detailed responses from each event.

Summary Findings: Issues

Funding: This included better recognition of the important role of Out of School Care by local authorities, the high costs of childcare for parents and the need for them to be subsidised, and paying for training and qualifications. For rural areas a lack of numbers also impacts on financial viability. Support to include children with additional needs was also mentioned in terms of meeting their rights to have play opportunities with peers and respite care for parents.

Premises cost, quality and resources: This included, in some areas, the high cost of school lets, especially during holidays, including winter provision, school dining halls not suitable as good quality play spaces, difficulties around sharing school space, access to office space or school internet, and, especially in rural areas, access to any suitable premises.

Management committees: Parent fatigue as volunteer managers, committee members' difficulties in understanding the division between their role and that of the manager and opinions on what out of school care should cover.

Staffing: This included a need for pay scales linked to qualifications and size of service and especially in rural areas difficulties in recruiting suitably qualified staff or for shorter hour posts. Lack of recognition as fellow professionals by other groups was also an issue.

Regulation training and qualifications: Although qualifications and care inspections were "parked aside" issues, they still came up in terms of being able to pay for and access suitable training and qualifications, changing legislation, excessive paperwork, employer responsibilities, changing goalposts for training, children's plans and (some) Care Inspectorate staff treating OSC as a nursery rather than a different type of service.

Displacement: Services mentioned OSC activities provided by schools or leisure centres in the summer (such services not required to register with CI) reducing numbers and affecting viability of services and this is particularly acute in rural areas.

Transport: This was a particular issue in rural areas.

Other issues: including catering for P7 children and a wide age range, accessing leisure passes in school holidays, communication with local authorities, and, in rural areas seasonal work and unmet holiday care demand.

Summary Findings: 1. Why is OSC important? What would you tell national government about OSC?

Children's development: Staff were clear that children's social, emotional and cognitive development was supported through out of school care, because of the opportunities to socialise and with access to activities, such as play, trips and resources which might not be available at home. Out of school care provides vital developmental opportunities of children in all communities throughout the country, regardless of economic factors as it allows children to grow and bond socially within their community, giving them an owned identity which can help them shape their and its future.

Services point out the stability they offer children with children often being with a service for seven years. Of particular importance are services for children with additional support needs as vital for providing a safe environment for interacting and socialising with peers, as these children are not able to do this independently.

Children gain additional life skills and get involved in citizenship initiatives. Also important in terms of social inclusion and community cohesion with children mixing with other children from different schools and cultures.

Children's Rights under the UNCRC – especially the right to play: Staff mentioned that out of school care should come from the children's UNCRC- right to culture, leisure, rest and play. Providing challenging play opportunities with professionally qualified practitioners- child-led play, and should link to the national play strategy. They provide extended play opportunities and resources, e.g. opportunities for playing outside when parents might fear to let children out to play in local streets.

Supporting Families: Families improve their life opportunities and financial circumstances, as parents are able to undertake education, training and employment. This also benefits the children. Services provides additional support for vulnerable families- information, advice, on agencies etc. that can provide help. OSC is an important service for working parents, carers, social services, children and schools.

Supporting Communities and home/school links: Through involvement in local community – fund raising; re-cycling projects; working with other clubs and age groups. It forms a bridge between formal education and home life. Children can have input into what they do.

Other Key messages from services for development of a national policy:

- Inclusion- children with ASN- should be a priority (currently tokenistic inclusion)
- Supporting consistency in quality
- Subsidy straight to services
- Statutory recognition with partnership services
- Recognition of partnership working- recognition as being part of a multi-agency team
- Play – importance for school-age children
- Recognition that it should be child's right to attend (and not just about being a service for working parents).
- Financial support
 - Matched to individual child's needs
 - Transport
 - Premises- own dedicated space
 - Training, especially to support children with ASN
 - Quality improvement
- Every service should have direct access to outdoor space
- More partnership with schools- professional recognition and better information sharing.
- Highlight the benefits to the community- not a babysitting service, it is quality childcare with professional staff.
- Childcare isn't just 0 – 5s: supporting children & families in school holidays is as important as after school hours. Working parents work all year round.
- Joint planning locally.
- Better promotion of OSC to parents and promotion of family information services.
- Professional recognition – not just a babysitting service (again).
- Early intervention – OSC services have a close relationship with children and families, often pick up issues before other support services.
- Support transition from nursery to primary and primary to secondary.
- Social interaction – children from different schools mix.
- Support child development – providing risk and challenge; build self-esteem.
- Set out difference between education and care.
- OSC should also be thought of in terms of respite care for vulnerable children.

Summary Findings: 2. How do you improve the lives of children (and how can you prove that)?

Children's development and wellbeing:

Supporting children to become independent creative citizens building life skills: self-esteem & confidence. Provide a range of play opportunities involving choice, their ideas; learning new skills and building on their existing skills.

A place to relax and chill out- child is able to engage with staff and doesn't feel intimidated. 'Adult free' play experience in managed care setting, clearly supporting development, skills and benefits to the children.

Social skills, Increased confidence and awareness of rights. Healthy eating and healthy snacks, including learning about it, and physical play activities. Healthy eating policy, menus, play policy, photos, outdoor areas.

Support children with behavioural issues- observations, evaluations, child's development plan. Individual care plan and holistic support Learning through play alongside other children. Children have a sense of belonging. Children have choices. Staff are role models.

Listening to Children:

Give children opportunities to make decisions which service acts upon. Listen to children and young people and be their voice- gives opportunities to participate with peers. By asking children for ideas/input so it's their ASC – photos; play/activity planners; snack planners. Children are listened to and views acted on, e.g. resources and planning. Children make up positive club rules. Listen to children and young people and be their voice- gives opportunities to participate with peers.

Evidence of need/ benefits to children and parents:

It's a needed and "in-demand" service- has waiting lists. Through parents questionnaires (survey results) – children's councils and children's talent shows- parents' attendance and evaluations. Continuity of care- parental feedback; plans for each child; children's feedback. Hard to measure/define and evidence apart from confident, outgoing, happy children and happy parents. Evidence collected through open evenings, personal plans, photographs and quality play experiences, children's questionnaires and GIRFEC- SHANARRI indicators. Children develop holistically – plan-do-review, photographs. Suggestion made by one service to find past children (alumni) and see what impact OSC had on their lives.

Summary Findings: 3. In what way are you a community asset? (Question to consider- what does the community think of you?)

Service provision:

Many services pointed out that providing out of school and holiday care is a valuable community asset in itself. As in previous questions the benefits to children of realising their right to play in a safe environment with trained and experienced staff were mentioned. We provide flexible affordable childcare that understand the needs of children and parents in our local community. also in our rural area, working parents can now send children to local school where there is now childcare provision.

Family network: supporting the whole family unit (siblings, home life, transport) and a “listening ear”- teachers/head teachers; parents; grandparents; carers; social services; children. Holiday care for 4.5 year olds helps with transition from nursery to school

Respite Care: Provide respite breaks to give families quality time with other family members, recharge batteries and to ensure the family unit can remain together- families know their child is in the care of trained quality staff. Providing places for children with disabilities - promoting inclusion.

Employment and volunteering: Employing local people and enabling local parents to take up training and employment. Parents gain skills and confidence as volunteers on committees. Work placements for school children.

Contributing to and linking with community:

Helping children become community minded – foodbank and fundraising fairs. Support for other organisations e.g. old folks homes, churches, local school, parent partnerships/parent councils. Links with other OSC services. We are based within the children’s neighbourhood/community. Litter picks, gala days, fundraising...Relationships with other community organisations and helping the school to improve its buildings and environment. Provision of opportunities for inter-generational working and social inclusion- promote equality and diversity, support community health issues and link up with yoga classes for community, fundraising, community events etc. Highly visible in community during holidays parents see staff with groups of children going out and about and ask about childcare.

Providing training and play events/information:

Training for teaching/support staff in play or informal learning through play and training the community. Organising closing of streets for outdoor community play days, organising stay and play sessions for parents to learn the value of play and organising play days in the community.

Summary: 4. How do you/could provide you better support families?

Current information and advice provided:

Provide information for outside agencies e.g. PPP, childcare vouchers, benefits etc. Also sign-post to health improvements and addiction services. Listen to problems/parenting classes/advice on ground rules/behaviour at home. Empathy. Make them aware of what resources are available to them in whatever their needs may be. Provide information on childcare vouchers. Questionnaire asking parents what support they require. Information point- available services including health contacts, adult learning and support re financial information.

Current parental support provided:

Support those with children with ASN. Safe place to play – form friendships (parents too- network of support). Inclusive play opportunities. Flexible hours to meet parental demand (if there is one). Parenting classes. Single parent support group. Parent and child play days- information on play to help development. Support for children with ASN to stay in communities- work with local health agencies and providing emergency/respice childcare.

Parents' routine at service concert – Parents went to camp to experience what children do.

Networked with local sport groups and took children to rugby and football.

Tie in with local galas and festivals and links with local youth clubs. Parent workshops on play (and importance of it to children's all round development) and raising awareness and benefits of risky play. Being flexible supports parents.

Could do more to support families (if resourced):

ASN service: Most groups on weekly basis as at moment only accessible once a fortnight for each family due to demand of service and funding available for additional needs.

Funded places for unemployed families and GIRFEC- early intervention and support. Early intervention help for @risk families before they reach crisis point.

Additional hours/weekend services and flexible hours to meet parental demand (if there). Offer a more flexible service for emergencies and provide additional support: home/weekends/ evenings and better partnership working with other agencies, schools and nurseries.

Local holiday provision as entitlement- all areas and more raising awareness and benefits of risky play. More availability of OSC places.

Summary: Why do you need a national organisation for out of school care?

National policy level: Taking the sector's views to government and policy makers and representing them with statutory agencies. This also includes keeping people up to date with legislative changes and developments and providing resources and information to support services with new policy.

A national networking "Hub": Intermediary- centre of network: and information hub for sharing ideas between clubs and different areas. Collating information on issues and provide good ideas and examples from other services. Highlights good practice and provides surveys/ results. Free and low cost good practice publications, guidance and connects services with each other.

Information, support and advice: This included contact with SOSCN staff and using website resources and publications, as well as at events and meetings. A contact for services – extra assurance and help (support) and providing set-up information. Support- provide information and help services "fill in the gaps".

Events, training and quality development: This included free or low cost training and events and SOSCN's quality improvement framework mentoring and assessment. Training provided was also considered relevant as tailored for OSC.

What else could SOSCN do for services?

- Would like an on-line forum and other opportunities to network (conference calls/skype) without attending events- might not have the time/resources to attend.
- Would like training on managing challenging behaviour.
- Play training

What would be the impact if SOSCN wasn't here?

- Wouldn't have any of the above things we value and benefit from in having a national org...
- Profile of out of school care would be lost.
- Play would be lost from the agenda- focus would be pre-school.
- Sense of isolation.
- The services needs unity and pull together.
- Training would suffer.
- Specialist knowledge would be lost.
- There would be a lack (certainly fewer) resources and publications – SOSCN can provide overview of documents and legislation.
- Need a national organisation – professional status and recognition.
- Quality of childcare would suffer.

Appendix: Collated Consultation responses by event

Glasgow

Tuesday 9th December 2014

Training required

- Play training
- Responsibilities

Issues

- Paper work
- Glasgow City Council winter shutdown- no lets unless meet cost for janitors.
- Lack of support for additional needs, rights to play out with school with peers.
- Recognition for qualifications/size of service through pay scales.
- Need for management committees to understand the roles of their staff and where their responsibilities lie, or don't lie.
- Provision within schools for some office space.
- Need for internet access within schools.

Solutions

- None given
-

#1 Why is OSC important? What would you tell national government about OSC?

- Our service is for children with additional support needs and is vital for providing a safe environment for interacting and socialising with peers, as these children are not able to do this independently.
- We potentially have children for 7 years (every year); we are therefore the most consistent thing in their lives- we provide stability.
- Providing families with opportunities to improve their life opportunities and financial circumstances as parents are able to undertake education, training and employment which overall benefits the children.
- New opportunities for play/trips. Visits that children's parents might not be able to supply.
- Gives children an opportunity to socialise and interact with peers after school which they may not otherwise get fur to parents' fears of letting them out on the streets. Also allows children from different schools and backgrounds to socialise- helps with community integration.
- Provides additional support for vulnerable families- information, advice, agencies etc. that provide help.

- Actioning the UNCRC- right to culture, leisure, rest and play. Providing challenging play opportunities with professionally qualified practitioners- child-led play.

#2 How do you improve the lives of children (and how can you prove that)?

- It's a needed and "in-demand" service- have waiting lists.
- A place to relax and child out- child is able to engage with staff and doesn't feel intimidated.
- Healthy eating and physical play – healthy eating policy, menus, play policy, photos, outdoor areas.
- Support children with behavioural issues- observations, evaluations, child's development plan.
- Children's talent shows- parents' attendance; evaluations.
- Parents questionnaires (survey results) – children's councils
- Give children opportunities to make decisions which service acts upon.
- Listen to children and young people and be their voice- gives opportunities to participate with peers.
- Inclusive project.
- Supporting children to become independent creative citizens building life skills: self-esteem & confidence.
- Provide a range of play opportunities involving choice, their ideas; learning new skills and building on their existing skills.

#3 In what way are you a community asset? Question to consider- what does the community think of you?

- Keep children safe.
- Providing a much-needed service.
- Employing local people.
- Support for other organisations e.g. old folks homes, churches, local school, parent partnerships/parent councils.
- Links with other OSC services.
- We are based within the children's neighbourhood/community.
- Litter picks, gala days, fundraising...
- Providing training for community groups.
- Integration – children play with different age groups and others in the area they wouldn't otherwise play with.

- Provide respite breaks to give families quality time with other family members, recharge batteries and to ensure the family unit can remain together- families know their child is in the care of trained quality staff.
- Organise street closure with other organisations to provide family play/activity days.
- Provide mobile crèche.

#4 How do you/could provide you better support families?

- Provide information for outside agencies e.g.PPP, childcare vouchers, benefits etc. Also sign-post to health improvements and addiction services.
- Support them with children with ASN.
- More groups on weekly basis as at moment only accessible once a fortnight for each family due to demand of service and funding available for additional needs.
- Safe place to play – form friendships (parents too- network of support)
- Inclusive play opportunities.
- Listen to problems/parenting classes/advice on ground rules/behaviour at home
- Empathy.
- Funded places for unemployed families/
- GIRFEC- early intervention and support. Early intervention help for @risk families before they reach crisis point.
- Additional hours/weekend services.

Why do you need a national organisation?

- A voice at national level.
- Need to collate issues.
- Provide information/assistance to meet legislation and examples.
- Provide information on new policies and procedures from the Care Inspectorate and the SSSC.
- Represent the interests of services with the Care Inspectorate and the SSSC.
- Keeps people up-to-date with legislation changes and developments.
- Provide good ideas and able to share ideas and examples from other services.
- Lobbying politicians- seeing childcare as an investment.
- Would like an on-line forum and other opportunities to network (conference calls/skype) without attending events- might not have the time/resources to attend.

What would be the impact if SOSCN wasn't here?

- Profile of out of school care would be lost.
- Play would be lost from the agenda- focus would be pre-school.
- Sense of isolation.
- The service needs unity and pull together.
- Training would suffer.
- Specialist knowledge would be lost.
- There would be a lack (certainly fewer) resources and publications – SOSCN can provide overview of documents and legislation.
- Need a national organisation – professional status and recognition.
- Quality of childcare would suffer.

Edinburgh OSC Consultation

Tuesday 27th January 2015

Issues

- Higher qualifications mean higher cost to parents.
- Stop moving goalposts for training.
- Cost of childcare to parents is rising – more support to parents needed.
- Getting other groups to recognise us as professionals.
- Improved play spaces- most ASC are in dining rooms/gym halls.
- Funding & more opportunities for training. SSSC expect 5/60/hours but lack of courses as well as funding.
- Where is the money coming from for all the qualifications we are required to have?

Solutions

- None given

What should be in a national OSC policy?

- Professional recognition – not just a babysitting service.
- Early intervention – OSC services have a close relationship with children and families, often pick up issues before other support services.
- Support transition from nursery to primary and primary to secondary.
- Social interaction – children from different schools mix.
- Support child development – providing risk and challenge; build self-esteem.
- Set out difference between education and care.
- OSC should also be thought of in terms of respite care for vulnerable children.

#1 Why is OSC important? What would you tell national government about OSC?

- Need staff recognition in terms of qualifications and other expectations.
- Support children's rights to play by providing a wide range of play opportunities.
- Needs to be accessible for all communities.
- Important service for working parents, carers, social services, children and schools.
- Consistent link between school and home.
- A necessity – more direct funding.
- Need own space – should look at the transfer of community assets from LAs to OSCs.
- Cost of childcare vs value of childcare.

#2 How do you improve the lives of children (and how can you prove that)?

- Help inform children about healthy snack choices/overall healthier choices.
- Children's snack suggestions in August were unhealthy but as the year progressed, their suggestions became healthier.
- Providing social interaction with other children and adults.
- Continuity of care- parental feedback; plans for each child; children's feedback.
- Opportunity to play.
- By asking children for ideas/input so it's their ASC – photos; play/activity planners; snack planners
- Nominated for ELC star award for service to children in East Lothian.

#3 In what way are you a community asset?

- Provide a social space for children.
- Provide a service for working parents.
- A "listening ear"- teachers/head teachers; parents; grandparents; carers; social services; children.
- Being out and about during holidays- parents ask about the service.
- Making transition easier by offering services during holidays for 41/2 year olds.
- Training for teaching/support staff in play or informal learning through play.
- Giving jobs to local people.
- Work experience for school children.

#4 How do you/could you provide better support families?

- Flexible hours to meet parental demand (if there).
- Parenting classes.

- Single parent support group.
- Parent and child play days- information on play to help development.
- Support for children with AS to stay in communities- work with local health agencies.
- Emergency/respice childcare.
- Parents' routine at service concert –
- Parents went to camp to experience what children do.
- Networked with local sport groups and took children to rugby and football.
- Tie in with local galas and festivals.
- Links with local youth clubs.

Why do you need a national organisation?

- Support- provide information and help services “fill in the gaps”.
- Free/low-cost training which is relevant.
- (Would like training on managing challenging behaviour.)
- Support/information re inspections – SOSCN has good links with the Care Inspectorate.
- Sharing ideas
- Influence policy and government – lobbying.

What would be the impact if SOSCN wasn't here?

- Wouldn't have any of the things we value and benefit from in having a national org...

SOSCN -Stirling OSC Consultation

Tuesday 3rd February 2015

Issues

- Always local authorities and funding. Making them aware of the need for OSC and how important we are.
- Keeping up with legislation – e.g. recent allergens advice.
- Care Inspectorate- amount of paperwork and inconsistencies. Employer responsibilities.
- Trying to get staff with offering shorter hours; putting in training for them.
- Sharing school premises.
- Provision for older age group. P7s and the difficulties of providing for all age groups,
- Working with local authorities- lack of communication.
- Changing committees and their opinions on the role of OSC and what we should be doing.
- Care Inspectorate- greater awareness of play. Non- ‘nursery’ based inspections for OSC.

Solutions

- None given

What should be in a national OSC policy?

- Need for OSC to come from child- child's right to play.
- Should tie in with the national play strategy.
- More partnership with schools- professional recognition.
- Better sharing of information between professionals.
- Value and benefit of OSC.
- Highlight the benefits to the community- not a babysitting service; inform parents and education services etc. about the quality childcare.

#1 Why is OSC important? What would you tell national government about OSC?

- It would be great if they could really take OSC seriously and not see it as a bit of extra 'babysitting'. Play strategy 'vision' had excellent ideas. Full primary age 5 – 12 should be considered as very important.
- That we are an important part of the community and play a big part in children's lives by providing a fun, play environment resulting in happy, social children.
- That OSC is providing quality childcare, allowing every child in its care to grow and achieve the skills they would otherwise not have.
- That childcare isn't just 0 – 5s: supporting children & families in school holidays is as important as after school hours. Working parents work all year round.

#2 How do you improve the lives of children (and how can you prove that)?

- By photographic evidence and the child's own reports in their play portfolio.
- Children are happy and feel safe- proved through questionnaires/surveys/profiles etc. with children and their parents.
- 'Adult free' play experience in managed care setting, clearly supporting development, skills and benefits to the children – hard to measure/define and evidence apart from confident, outgoing, happy children and happy parents.

#3 In what way are you a community asset?

- Allowing parents to work helps them contribute to local community.
- Helping children become community minded – foodbank and fundraising fairs.
- Relationships with other community organisations.

- Community specific.
- Helping the school to improve its buildings and environment.
- Encouraging parents on committee- raising confidence.
- Providing places for children with disabilities – giving parents respite- promoting inclusion.
- Provide a play day during summer for local community – encouraging parents to say and play; by doing this the parent then can see the benefit of play.
- Flexible affordable childcare that understand the needs of children and parents in our local community. Also in our rural area, working parents can now send children to local school where there is now childcare provision. Parents able to return to work, training etc.,
- We link up with yoga classes for community, fundraising, community events etc.

#4 How do you/could you provide better support families?

- Create very flexible childcare which links up with complicated family work patterns.
- 'Sponsored' or 'funded' places.
- Parents consultative/committee- involve parents in development and evolution of the service.
- Make them aware of what resources are available to them in whatever their needs may be.

Why do you need a national organisation?

- National voice, especially with all the changes.
- Keeping OSC on the agenda.
- A contact for services – extra assurance and help (support).
- Set-up information.
- Free/low-cost events and information.
- Intermediary- centre of network: and information hub for sharing ideas between clubs.

What would be the impact if SOSCN wasn't here?

- Wouldn't have any of the things we value and benefit from in having a national org...

**SOSCN -Bellshill OSC Consultation
Thursday 12th March 2015**

Issues

- Transport
- Premises
- Funding
- Personal plans for children

What should be in a national OSC policy?

- Inclusion- children with ASN- should be a priority (currently tokenistic inclusion)
- Supporting consistency in quality
- Subsidy straight to services
- Statutory recognition with partnership services?
- Recognition of partnership working- recognition as being part of a multi-agency team
- Play – importance for school-age children
- Recognition that it should be child's right to attend (and not just about being a service for working parents).
- Financial support
 - Matched to individual child's needs
 - Transport
 - Premises- own dedicated space
 - Training, especially to support children with ASN
 - Quality improvement
- Every service should have direct access to outdoor space

#1 Why is OSC important? What would you tell national government about OSC?

- Support for children and builds social relationships.
- Social and emotional develop- extending knowledge and opportunities.
- Opportunities through play experiences and activities.
- Social inclusion- the right to play.
- Allows parents to work.

- It provide vital developmental opportunities of children in all communities throughout the country, regardless of economic factors.
- It allows children to grow and bond socially within their community, giving them an owned identity which can help them shape their and its future.

#2 How do you improve the lives of children (and how can you prove that)?

- Individualise support. Meeting needs.
- Evidence by open evenings, personal plans, photographs and quality play experiences.
- Children's questionnaires.
- GIRFEC- SHANARRI indicators.
- Children get to socialise with other children from outside their normal social circles.
- Children develop holistically – plan-do-review, photographs.
- Fund past children (alumni) and see what impact OSC had on their lives.

#3 In what way are you a community asset?

- Trained and experienced workforce
- Family network: supporting the whole family unit (siblings, home life, transport)
- Space available when not in use for community council meetings/NDNA meetings and gala days
- Within school premises- easily transferred from school environment to setting/offer full 3 hours service.
- Provide various play experiences in a caring and safe environment
- Question to ask: what do the community think of you?

#4 How do you/could you provide better support families?

- Offer a more flexible service for emergencies.
- Provide additional support: home/weekends/ evenings
- Parent/carer monthly meetings.
- Opening up planning meetings to parents
- Better partnership working with other agencies, schools and nurseries.
- Provide information on childcare vouchers
- Questionnaire asking parents what support they require

Why do you need a national organisation?

- Support and advice
- Particularly national perspective
- Ideas from other areas
- Quality assurance- provides consistency in sector
- Information gathering
 - Surveys and results (workforce survey)
- OSC heard at a political level
- Free/low-cost training
- Highlight good practice on website

SOSCN Consultation - Inverness

Thursday 26th March 2015

What would you like to see in a national out of school care policy?

- It should be based around the child- child's right to OSC (statutory provision).
- Written from a child's perspective.
- Not a homework club but parental expectation can be difficult.
- Emphasise that it is a play service and rest is important.
 - Risky play
- Broadening of social experiences for children.
- Makes stronger communities.
- Should be free at point of delivery
 - Resources should go directly to services.
- Workforce
 - Professional recognition.
 - Better pay and conditions.
- Designated space, including direct outdoor access.

What are the issues locally for you?

- OSC activities run by school taking away from OSC.
- School lets, especially during holidays.
- Holiday provision – unmet demand but this is in specific areas.
- Leisure service activities during holidays taking away from OSC- not integrated.
- Some areas there is an issue of viability of services due to numbers.
- Issues around parents' seasonal work – some services are busier during the holidays.
- Highland leisure family card should also link into out of school care.
- Information sharing- can be down to individual personalities.
- Recruitment in rural areas, especially in terms of qualified staff.

Good practice locally

- Supported transport to OSC
- Integration with schools (but issues over holidays)

#1. Why is out of school care important? What would you tell national government about out of school care?

- It provides children with the opportunity to play together
 - Richer and expanded opportunities than normal
 - Free play
- Supports children's rights.
- Helps children's development
 - Social
 - Cognitive
 - Additional life skills
 - Challenges gender roles etc.
 - Citizenship (e.g. club wrote to council re local issue and action taken by Highland Council)
- Involvement in local community – fund raising; re-cycling projects; working with other clubs and age groups.
- It forms a bridge between formal education and home life. Children can have input into what they do.

#2. How do you improve the lives of children- what difference do you make? (And how can you prove this?) The “so what” question.

- Social skills
- Increased confidence
- Awareness of rights
- Support families as a unit
- Being flexible- don't have rules you don't need!
- Children involved in making their positively worded rules for their club.
- Provide sense of belonging and ownership.
- Children are listened to and views acted on, e.g. resources and planning.
- Learning through play alongside other children.
- Healthy eating promoted.
- Choice.
- Learning new skills- giving opportunities to learn new skills.
- Staff are role models.

#3. In what way are you a community asset?

- The only funded provision for some parents.
- Holiday care.
- Day care.
- Fund raising for local community projects providing a service where children are safe and engaged.
- Opportunities for inter-generational working.
- Raising health issues.
- Hub- communities.
- Social inclusion- promote equality and diversity.

#4. How do you, or could you, better support families through your service?

- Parent workshops on play (and importance of it to children's all round development).
- Information point- available services including health contacts, adult learning and support re financial information.
- Local holiday provision as entitlement- all areas.
- Raising awareness and benefits of risky play.
- Be flexible!
- More availability of places.

Inveraray, May 2015

Answers to the questions were the same as other areas, apart from the answers below:

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Rural Issues

- Transport and associated expense.
- Lack of transport and suitable premises.
- Committee and volunteer fatigue.
- Difficulty of recruiting qualified and suitable staff.
- Difficulty of networking.
- Financial viability- lack of numbers.

What should be in a national policy?

- Joint planning locally.
- Promotion of family information services.
- Consistency in terms of registration e.g. in some areas, activity clubs during the holidays run for more than 2 hours (up to 5 hours) by local authorities and leisure trusts are not having to register with the Care Inspectorate.
- Better promotion of OSC including to parents.



Scottish Out of School Network

supporting children's rights to play, care and learning

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Registered Address: Level 2, 100 Wellington Street, Glasgow G2 6DH**