

WORKFORCE

SURVEY

2021

RESULTS

Out of School Care
Workforce Statistics

SCOTTISH OUT OF SCHOOL CARE NETWORK

WORKFORCE SURVEY 2021 RESULTS

Out of School Care Workforce Statistics

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OVERVIEW

Introduction

The Scottish Out of School Care Network (SOSCN) has conducted an annual survey of the out of school childcare workforce in Scotland since 2008. All previous survey reports can be found at <https://soscn.org/policy/statistics>.

In this 2021 survey, a number of questions were asked in addition to the usual suite, which related to the impact of COVID on individuals, and their experiences and thoughts relating to the qualifications currently approved for registration with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC).

Methodology

The survey was open for a five-week period from mid-November 2021 and was publicised widely through membership e-mailings, SOSCN website and social media channels; in addition, all member services received hard copies of the survey. Individuals could also complete e-versions to be returned by email or completed online. The online survey was hosted on [freeonlinesurvey.com](https://www.freeonlinesurvey.com)

The results from any completed surveys received by email or post were entered into the online version.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF RESULTS

General Overview

From a total of 295 responses received, nine were insufficiently complete to be used; this meant a total of 286 responses were analysed. 124 responses (43%) were completed by Lead Practitioners; 103 (36%) by Practitioners, and 59 (21%) by Support Workers.

Responses were received from OSC services located in 26 (out of 32) Scottish local authorities.

90% of respondents were female and 10% male.

59% of respondents worked in the voluntary sector; 22% in the private sector, and 16% in the public sector.

85% of respondents worked in services only providing out of school childcare (OSC) and 13% worked in combined ELC and OSC services.

94% of respondents were registered with the SSSC, and 2% weren't registered. 1% was registered with the General Teaching Council Scotland (GTCS).

75% of respondents said they saw working in OSC as a career; 10% said they didn't, and 14% were unsure.

53% of respondents said they were very satisfied working in OSC; 39% said they were fairly satisfied; 6% said they were not very satisfied, and 2% said they were dissatisfied.

65% of respondents said they currently hold the appropriate registerable qualifications; 7% said they didn't; 18% said they didn't but were currently working towards it, and 5% said they didn't and weren't working towards it.

In response to the question: Currently how stressed do you feel?

26% of respondents said they felt 'not at all stressed'; 45% said they felt 'slightly stressed'; 14% said they felt 'stressed'; 9% said they felt 'very stressed' and 3% said they were 'at breaking point'.

In response to the question: Currently how physically tired do you feel?

19% of respondents said they felt 'not at all tired'; 37% said they felt 'slightly tired'; 24% said they felt 'tired'; 15% said they felt 'exhausted', and 4% said they were 'at breaking point'.

In response to the question: Currently how would you rate your mental wellbeing?

12% of respondents said they felt 'great'; 40% said they felt 'good'; 34% said they felt 'OK'; 11% said they felt 'not very good', and 2% said they were 'at breaking point'.

OVERVIEW OF RESULTS BY JOB CATEGORY

Below are the main results, however we would encourage readers to read the whole report as there is in-depth information, and quotes from individuals about their experiences of dealing with the pandemic, and their thoughts and experiences of undertaking registerable qualifications.

Lead Practitioner Overview

93% were female and 7% were male.

The average age was 47 years old, and ranged from 22 – 68 years old.

3% said they had a disability.

62% worked in the voluntary/3rd/charitable sectors; 25% in the private sector, and 10% in the public sector.

82% worked in services providing only OSC, and 14% worked in ELC & OSC combined services.

97% were registered with the SSSC and 2% were registered with the General Teaching Council Scotland (GTCS).

89% saw working in OSC as a career; 6% didn't, and 6% were unsure.

48% were very satisfied in their job; 40% were 'fairly satisfied'; 10% were 'not very satisfied' and less than 1% was dissatisfied.

The average working week term time was 30 hours, and ranged from 10 – 50 hours. The average working week holiday time was 34 hours, and ranged from 12 – 51.5 hours.

The average salary was £14.10 per hour but ranged from £9 - £23 per hour.

The average number of years working in the sector was 14 but ranged from less than a year – 38 years.

When asked how stressed they currently feel, 14% said 'not at all'; 42% said 'slightly stressed'; 19% said 'stressed'; 18% said 'very stressed', and 7% were at 'breaking point'.

When asked how physically tired they feel, 9% said 'not at all'; 30% said 'slightly tired'; 30% said 'tired'; 23% said 'exhausted', and 6% said they were at 'breaking point'.

When asked how they would rate their mental wellbeing, 9% said 'great'; 35% said 'good'; 36% said 'OK'; 17% said 'not very good', and 2% said they were at 'breaking point'.

62% said they had the appropriate qualification for their job; 6% said they didn't; 21% said they didn't but were currently working towards it, and 6% said they didn't and weren't currently working towards it.

In general, for Lead Practitioners the best thing about working in OSC was the children.

Aside from the current difficulties of delivering childcare during the ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic (financial concerns, reduced numbers of children attending, staff absences, recruitment, and additional paperwork), the biggest challenges as identified by Lead Practitioners were: pay; lack of professional recognition and status; training and qualifications, and issues with premises.

When asked what impact the learning from the required qualification (completed or underway) had/is having on practice, the responses were mixed. Some respondents said that undertaking the qualification has had a positive impact on their practice- it has given them more skills, boosted self-confidence and enabled them to be better managers. Other respondents however said they did not find the qualification a positive experience and felt that it was a 'tick box' exercise to keep their job.

Some commented that the qualification contents were not relevant for school age childcare and too early years focussed, and that it was very time consuming at the expense of work and family life. Some respondents said they would like qualifications to have course content around managing and marketing a small business, HR, finance and fundraising. They would also like content around supporting children with ASN and mental health issues.

Practitioners Overview

90% were female and 9% were male.

The average age was 43 years old, and ranged from 20 – 65 years old.

4% said they had a disability.

47% worked in the voluntary/3rd/charitable sectors; 24% in the private sector, and 26% in the public sector.

83% worked in services providing only OSC, and 17% worked in ELC & OSC combined services.

95% were registered with the SSSC and 1% were not yet registered.

73% saw working in OSC as a career; 12% don't, and 14% were unsure.

54% were very satisfied in their job; 37% were 'fairly satisfied'; 4% were 'not very satisfied' and 3% were dissatisfied.

The average working week term time was 22 hours, and ranged from 7 – 40 hours. The average working week holiday time was 26 hours, and ranged from 4 - 40 hours.

The average salary was £10.31 per hour but ranged from £4.15 - £15 per hour.

The average number of years working in the sector was 9 but ranged from a year – 31 years.

When asked how stressed they currently feel, 31% said 'not at all'; 51% said 'slightly stressed'; 10% said 'stressed'; 5% said 'very stressed', and 2% were at 'breaking point'.

When asked how physically tired they feel, 24% said 'not at all'; 41% said 'slightly tired'; 21% said 'tired'; 12% said 'exhausted', and 2% said they were at 'breaking point'.

When asked how they would rate their mental wellbeing, 15% said 'great'; 38% said 'good'; 36% said 'OK'; 9% said 'not very good', and 3% said they were at 'breaking point'.

77% said they had the appropriate qualification for their job; 7% said they didn't; 13% said they didn't but were currently working towards it, and 2% said they didn't and weren't currently working towards it.

In general, for Practitioners the best thing about working in OSC was the children.

The biggest challenges in OSC as identified by Practitioners were: children's behaviour and engaging older children; financial issues/sustainability; paperwork; pay, conditions and hours of work; lack of space and shared premises; staffing issues, and more general issues around service delivery during the current pandemic.

When asked what impact the learning from the required qualification (completed or underway) had/is having on practice, most of the responses were positive and described how it has built confidence in their day-to-day practice, and it helps with completing paperwork and developing/understanding policies and procedures.

The majority of respondents said that 'nothing' was missing from the qualifications. Others however said they would like qualifications to cover attachment theory; conflict resolution; mental/emotional health issues, and also specific information around supporting children with ASN including autism, Aspergers and dyspraxia.

Although the majority of respondents said that undertaking the qualification had been positive not only in their OSC practice but also in their wider family relationships, about a third said that it had either had no impact or a negative one on their life. In these instances, most indicated that it was hard to balance work, study and family life, and in some instances the pressures were too great meaning people discontinued with the qualification.

Support Workers Overview

81% were female and 19% were male.

The average age was 38 years old, and ranged from 15 – 64 years old.

4% said they had a disability.

75% worked in the voluntary/3rd/charitable sectors; 14% in the private sector, and 10% in the public

93% worked in services providing only OSC, and 7% worked in ELC & OSC combined services.

86% were registered with the SSSC and 10% were not yet registered.

49% saw working in OSC as a career; 15% don't, and 34% were unsure.

59% were very satisfied in their job; 39% were 'fairly satisfied'; none were 'not very satisfied' and 1% was dissatisfied.

The average working week term time was 17.5 hours, and ranged from 4 – 32.5 hours. The average working week holiday time was 22 hours, and ranged from 4 - 40 hours.

The average salary was £9.45 per hour but ranged from £5 - £18.95 per hour.

The average number of years working in the sector was 6 but ranged from less than a year – 26 years.

When asked how stressed they currently feel, 41% said 'not at all'; 41% said 'slightly stressed'; 12% said 'stressed'; none said 'very stressed', and 2% were at 'breaking point'.

When asked how physically tired they feel, 29% said 'not at all'; 47% said 'slightly tired'; 15% said 'tired'; 3% said 'exhausted', and 2% said they were at 'breaking point'.

When asked how they would rate their mental wellbeing, 12% said 'great'; 53% said 'good'; 27% said 'OK'; 3% said 'not very good', and 2% said they were at 'breaking point'.

51% said they had the appropriate qualification for their job; 10% said they didn't; 20% said they didn't but were currently working towards it, and 8% said they didn't and weren't currently working towards it.

In general, for Support Workers the best thing about working in OSC was the children.

The biggest challenges in OSC as identified by Support Workers were: children's behaviour and managing behaviour.

When asked what impact the learning from the required qualification (completed or underway) had/is having on practice, the majority of responses were positive. Respondents said it has boosted their self-confidence and self-esteem but those who have found it to be negative highlighted the difficulty in balancing work, life and study, and in addition, questioned the relevance of the qualifications.

LEAD PRACTITIONER - RESULTS IN FULL

124 responses- 124 services

115 (93%) females and 9 (7%) males

AGE (116 responses)

Age range: 22 – 68

Median age: 49

Average age: 47

DISABILITY

Yes: 4 (3%)

No: 115 (93%)

Prefer not to say: (2%)

Unknown: 2 (2%)

ETHNICITY

White Scottish/English/Welsh/Northern Irish: 114 (92%)	White other: 4 (3%)	White Irish: 1 (<1%)
Other: Arab 1 (<1%)	Prefer not to say: 2 (2%)	Unknown: 2 (2%)

SECTOR

Voluntary/3rd/Charitable: 77 (62%)

Private: 31 (25%)

Public: 13 (10%)

Don't know: 2 (1%)

Unknown: 1 (<1%)

SERVICE

Only OSC: 102 (82%)

Combine ELC & OSC: 17 (14%)

Unknown: 5 (4%)

REGISTRATION

SSSC: 120 (97%)

GTCS: 3 (2%)

Other, NMC Registration: 1 (<1%)

Do you see working in OSC as a career?

Yes: 110 (89%)

No: 7 (6%)

Unsure: 7 (6%)

Unknown: 0

How satisfied are you in your job?

Very: 60 (48%)

Fairly: 50 (40%)

Not very: 12 (10%)

Dissatisfied: 1 (<1%)

Unknown: 1 (<1%)

Hours term-time per week

Range: 10 - 50

Median: 30

Average: 30

Hours holiday-time per week (105 responses)

15 people don't work holidays. 4 responses unknown.

Range: 12 – 51.5

Median: 30

Average: 34 hours

SALARY PER HOUR (110 responses)

1 self-employed, 13 responses unknown.

Range: £9 - £23

Median: £13.50

Average: £14.10

YEARS WORKING IN THE SECTOR (121 responses, 3 responses unknown)

2 responses, less than a year. 1 response unknown.

Range: Less than a year – 38 years

Median: 15 years

Average: 14 years

COVID impact- experience of working during the pandemic. Currently how stressed do you feel? (124 responses)

Not at all stressed: 17 (14%)

Slightly stressed: 52 (42%)

Stressed: 24 (19%)

Very stressed: 22 (18%)

At breaking point: 9 (7%)

Unknown: 0

COVID impact- experience of working during the pandemic. Currently how physically tired do you feel? (122 responses, 2 responses unknown)

Not at all tired: 11 (9%)

Slightly tired: 37 (30%)

Tired: 37 (30%)

Exhausted: 29 (23%)

At breaking point: 8 (6%)

Unknown: 2 (2%)

COVID impact- experience of working during the pandemic. **Currently how would you rate your mental wellbeing?** (123 responses, 1 response unknown)

Great: 11 (9%)

Good: 43 (35%)

OK: 45 (36%)

Not very good: 21 (17%)

At breaking point: 3 (2%)

Unknown: 1 (<1%)

COVID impact- would you like to provide any further information about the answers you have just provided? (All answers will be treated in confidence and anonymised in final result, if used.)

Just over half of respondents provided additional information, many of which were detailed and lengthy responses. There was not one main overwhelming issue but a number which recurred throughout responses and these included: staffing issues: staff shortages, staff leaving, recruitment issues and staff not always adhering to rules or guidance; financial difficulties; lack of resources; additional paperwork; insufficient paid hours to complete work; unclear or changing guidance, and concern for welfare and health of staff and children.

Some respondents felt more stressed at the start of the pandemic than now when everything was unknown and changing quickly; whereas others feel that they are now reaching breaking point- the strain of managing the ongoing situation has taken its toll.

Below is a selection of comments from respondents:

“A lot of the day to day stress was removed for me as I had to work from home. I wasn’t involved in all the cleaning, organising, looking after children and staff and complying with the legislation and guidance. I was also less likely to come into contact with the virus so felt safer at home. I still had anxious times and worried on behalf of my staff and the clubs. Felt the same frustrations waiting for guidance.”

“At first, working during COVID was daunting as this was all new and not sure how we as an organisation would be running. Once the management filtered down how things would work in the interim period and supported staff we all pulled together and supported one another and worked well as a team.”

“At work we try to find every opportunity to engage in exercises for our wellbeing but it’s not that, that’s been the issue- it’s been the amount of change; the not knowing if the children will stay or if parents change pathways and no longer need us; it’s the arguing for support from those we rent the building and space from, and most stressful is the amount of new information and changing guidance we’re expected to keep on top of when it’s not a full-time job like those in nurseries, especially the stress put on us by the Care Inspectorate.”

“COVID had a great impact on the setting: staff off sick more often, staff not always complying with the rules or not willing to understand the importance of following the guidance, staff relying on furlough pay and not notifying the company on time before resigning, no control on staff to comply with the rules outside of the setting. Of course, working under Covid-19 guidance had an impact on children in the setting: children were

divided in two bubbles (two different schools) with no contact at all between them, limited use of play resources and games, alternating days to go outside as the children couldn't mix between bubbles."

"COVID has created an environment where it is very difficult to future plan. I feel like I'm always covering absence somewhere and that makes it difficult to move forward with long term plans. I have seen a big rise recently in non-COVID illnesses that have staff missing work for a week at a time. Recruitment as always is a lengthy process- it takes me double the time to replace someone as their notice period."

"During the first year of Covid, it was very stressful but a lot of the guidance was clear. This year has been more difficult as the guidance has changed all the time and it is difficult to keep up with it. As a manager, it is the impact of Covid on the finance and staffing of the service that is more worrying as opposed to my own personal worries about getting Covid. You feel a responsibility towards your staff and families using the service and sometimes don't look after yourself enough."

"I have worked throughout the pandemic managing a team of practitioners and supporting them with any issues they have had, including mental health issues. I think now, I am beginning to feel the effects from that. I only feel stressed in my work life as I have been pressured into a very poor work life balance."

"I personally feel that the way we are run is not working, I feel all I have done is support my staff but there is no support whatsoever for me Committees are non-existent . 20 years in my post and the last 2 have been the worst ever."

"I'm overwhelmed with the following: constant updating of our guidance, we've just opened a third after school care and can't get any staff, staff are moaning about being outside all the time. Staff are leaving to get jobs in the retail sector, the cost of everything is increasing, including insurance, snack PPE. Children are anxious as they're hearing their parents talking about not having any money or running out of money, children are hungrier. I'm sure there's more but that's all that's coming to mind just now."

"If this had been asked for the first year of COVID my answers would be completely different, all would be near breaking point and that was due to other staff are there lack of contributions. But as we are over a year and its now normal, staff have returned to their own setting plus I'm double vaccinated. I'm more or less back to normal just with new safety systems in place, even though the pandemic is still ongoing."

"Managing 4 services through the pandemic has taken its toll. Having to think of 22 members of staff and 400 families' wellbeing and safety takes precedence over your own. Staffing shortages etc creates the feel of working 24/7 with checking phones and organising etc."

"The impact has been massive supporting children's, staff and parents' mental health. Worrying a lot about the vaccine passport situation. Big impact on mental health most of all. It's exhausting when covering sickness. It's very stressful when staff are isolating and you receive COVID notifications."

"It was stressful opening the service again after lockdown. I felt that as we reopened for keyworker children at first we were able to put practices in place. We were then able to tweak these and use what worked best for us. Good to use the risk assessment. Our fears did not happen."

"You never know when a staff member will have to self-isolate which could be very disruptive especially if more than one staff member was off at the same time. Some of my staff team are older or physically not so fit so I worry about what the consequences of them catching COVID will be on their long-term health. I also worry about what the parents think of our service if children catch COVID (ie do they blame us? do they think we're not cleaning enough etc)."

In general, what is the best thing about working in OSC?

The vast majority of respondents talked about working with children: seeing them grow and develop, building relationships with the children and their families, seeing happy children having fun. Many respondents emphasised they enjoyed working with school-age children.

Some respondents additionally mentioned they enjoyed being part of the local community and working with their colleagues. A small number of respondents said that the hours suited them.

Below is a selection of comments from respondents:

“Being able to provide a quality service for working parents and support the children in learning life skills, I particularly enjoy delivering holiday clubs. We recently started an ASN club and it's very rewarding to see the positive impact the club is having on family life by giving them respite and support so they can work without added pressure on other family members.”

“Caring for and nurturing children and watching them grow, thrive and reach their full potential in this environment. As I have been in this job for a long time it is lovely that some of our children come back and work with us during holiday clubs when they are 16. It is also fantastic to hear how they are doing and what kind of career they have chosen when they leave school.”

“Every day is different, the children are so appreciative and always manage to lift your spirits if you have had a tough day. I enjoy making children happy by providing exciting and challenging activities for them. I like that I'm there constantly to listen and ensure they are doing OK.”

“Everything. Children, staff, parents and carers. Knowing you are doing an important, worthwhile job. Seeing children develop and grow up in a nurtured environment staffed by young people who are skilled in lots of ways and who bring out the best in the children.”

“Meeting and getting to know children and families. Wonderful to see children learning through play and making new friends. It has been pleasurable to receive +ve comments from both children and parents "This isn't like an after school club, it's like a big play day." "what's not to like?" "My boy should be your PR, he tells everyone about it.”

“Providing a quality service; making a tangible difference to the kids; being valued by our community; employing local people; being creative; ever-changing.”

“The children. At times they have been the only thing that has kept me sane. The fun and laughter of children is just the best!!!”

“The joy of working and engaging with children. Being party to their sense of fun and excitement makes my job worthwhile.”

“The kids, they're hilarious!”

“The knowledge that we give children great experience while parents are doing all they can to make a good life for their families. For a lot of our families we are the thing that keeps them able to stay in work and grow themselves.”

In general, what is the biggest challenge about working in OSC?

Currently the effects and impact of COVID (either directly or indirectly) were seen to be the biggest challenge at present and this included: financial concerns, reduced numbers of children attending, staff absences, recruitment issues, and additional paperwork.

Aside from COVID-related issues, pay; lack of professional recognition and status; lack of additional funding or support; training and qualification requirements, and issues with premises were all identified as ongoing challenges.

Below is a selection of comments from respondents:

“COVID has been very challenging, the fact we use a church hall so have to adhere to their rules too. The restrictions in place as children don't always understand why we have to stick to it. Staff sometimes not being on the same page as such.”

“For a tiny organisation like us it's recruiting the right staff; endless to-do lists; pressures for education and training; raised expectations re the provision we offer set by governing bodies, by people who do not have to practice in real life- there is a profound disconnect between them and us. Less looming threat and judgement- more support and nurture.”

“For me as a manager, the biggest challenge recently is the finance. and trying to get staff. After that the biggest challenge is not being valued by the Government and agencies as we are continually forgotten or lumped onto the end of ELC. Also not being valued by the local authority and head teacher.”

“Just the usual culprits - premises, appropriate training, being respected.”

“Lack of funding, lack of suitable space and suitable storage space. Difficulty in securing and retaining staff.”

“Not being seen as "important". Lack of support from schools, other professionals. The level of paperwork required for my staff to complete and not enough hours for them to do it (they are on the floor with the children). Information/services etc not tailored to OSC.”

“Staffing and the pay. Our income is low because of the impact of COVID, we can't afford to raise salaries. The staff deserve a higher wage. We demand a lot of them to provide high quality care, they should be rewarded, it's just not possible right now.”

If you could change one thing about working in OSC, what would it be?

A number of main issues were identified from the responses: more hours; better pay; own premises; less paperwork; better professional recognition and status (and to be valued more); and for clearer information and guidance.

Below are a selection comments from respondents:

“A little more appreciation for the reality of the job.”

“A profession that young people were urged to embark on, from leaving school- a career path.”

“Better ways of the Care Inspectorate etc to filter down the information. Some sort of very easy to access central point, almost like a checklist to say this was the new guidance and it's easy to find and re-trace the new sources. And less pressure from them too.”

“For it to be part of the Governments plan for important childcare and be funded in the way that ELC is which will allow security for services which will also encourage people who want to work in this line of work that it is a secure job to be in. I have had a number of staff jump ship to work in schools because they are more financial secure that working in OSC even though they prefer the work in OSC. It will also allow staff to feel respected and valued in their line of working rather than being made to feel it’s not as an important job than working in a school.”

“Free afterschool care for families ensuring stability in jobs.”

“Increased pay especially for practitioners and support workers- can earn more in supermarket with far less responsibilities.”

“Unfortunately there is not one answer but for starters it would be good for OOSC to be removed from Day Care Of Children and be set up as Playwork which was the whole point of Out of School Care, we have lost our identity and now being classed with Education which we are not, we should be a safe and stimulating and inviting place for the children to attend until such times as the parent/carer collects from the club. I could go on forever.”

QUALIFICATIONS - Do you have the appropriate qualification for your job?

Yes: 77 (62%)

No: 8 (6%)

No but working towards it: 26 (21%)

No and not working towards it: 7 (6%)

Unknown: 6 (5%)

QUALIFICATIONS - What impact has the learning from the required qualification (completed or underway) had/is having on your practice?

Responses to this question were mixed. Some respondents said that undertaking the qualification has had a positive impact on their practice- it has given them more skills, boosted self-confidence and enabled them to be better managers. Other respondents however said they did not find the qualification a positive experience and felt that it was a ‘tick box’ exercise to keep their job. Some commented that the qualification contents were not relevant for school age childcare and too early years focussed, and that it was very time consuming at the expense of work and family life.

Below is a selection of comments from respondents:

“Has helped develop a better understanding of my role and leadership.”

“I actually don't think the BA was very helpful in my role. I felt like it was a tick box I had to achieve, it was interesting at times but did it improve my management? No. If anything it was detrimental to my service, all the time I spent writing assignments or at university I could have been working on my service. I think more practical qualifications such as SVQ is the way it should have stayed.”

“I didn't find the BA particularly useful to my role. It was extremely difficult to study for the degree while working full time and the assignments we had to undertake were more relevant to nursery practitioners

than out of school care workers. The SVQ4 on the other hand was extremely good and really helped me develop my role as a manager.”

“I enjoyed carrying out the qualification I have but I think I learned as much from working with members of staff who have worked in the service for years. Their experience and advice was so helpful to me. This is experience that is being lost to OSC services as they have loads of working experience but not the required qualification and feel they are too old to carry out qualification.”

“I feel I have all the knowledge and experience needed without a Degree with Excellent and Very Good grades and happy children and parents.”

“I found the BA in Childhood Practice has not impacted greatly on my practice. Much of it I found irrelevant to my job, with an overwhelming focus on leadership and management styles and practices that do not take into consideration the challenges of OSC.”

“I have enjoyed going from a ELC background to playwork. Now I am completing my BA it’s extremely education focused again but I am enjoying learning about leadership and trying to take that forward into my practice.”

“It has added to the workload but I have enjoyed the SVQ 3 and working on the 4. I do not want to go to university and think a BA is unnecessary but I require it for my role. I think working at an OSC is one of the lowest paying jobs coming from a university degree and for that amount of work required should be more, but is a severely underfunded work sector. I think SSSC should re-evaluate the qualification requirements as there is great difficult hiring and retaining staff with qualifications for a part time job. People who hold qualifications would rather work a full-time job which is completely understandable.”

“It involved extra costs for the group because we needed a staff member to cover for me. Doing the qualification has given me lots of new ideas and ways to make the group better. I think it also improves the standing of the position.”

“It was a game changer. I felt totally different in terms of how I viewed the role after completing the course.”

“It was interesting doing the qualification but I feel that it did not add to my ability of being a manager as I had 15/16 years of experience as a manager before I did the degree. It validated what I already put in to practice.”

“It's definitely making me think more about my work practice and improvements I can make but it's also extremely time consuming whilst trying to run a business and again keeping up with the paperwork!”

“My PDA level 9 has been invaluable to myself and my team in terms of my confidence in things like theory-based practice, evidence-based practice and my knowledge of playwork. Through my learning, I have been able to modify planning, evaluation, our attitude towards things like children's rights, change management, inclusion and diversity.”

“None - The BA in Childhood Practice is based on Early Years and is very outdated in terms of reading etc. It is very difficult to fit OOSC work into the required work. This is supposed to be for managers yet there is only one module on management, I completed more management work in Level 4 Playwork.”

“None. The qualification is interesting but has no bearing on the work I am doing in OSC. It is a tick box exercise that just causes additional stress on top of the challenges of the job. It has no impact on my practice. It has no impact on my leadership. All it is doing is exhausting me even more meaning I have less to

give to the children in my care. SSSC need to relook at the qualification expectations - who does it really benefit as it is not for the sake of the children in services?"

"PDA childhood studies has had a huge impact on my professional practices and that of my setting."

QUALIFICATIONS - Is there anything missing from the qualification which you think would be beneficial to know?

Approximately a quarter of respondents to this question said that nothing was missing from the qualifications.

The other respondents said that there needs to be more of a focus on school-age children and that they would like to see content around managing and marketing a small business, HR, finance and fundraising. They would also like content around supporting children with ASN and mental health issues.

Below is a selection of comments from respondents:

"BA childhood practice doesn't have much ASC specific focus- mostly nursery-based."

"I don't think any of the available qualifications are appropriate for my post. There is nothing in them that develops strategic business thinking, equips managers to apply for funding or even keep financial records. There is nothing in any of the qualifications that would have helped our organisation stay in business during lockdown."

"I personally feel we would be better prepared with some kind of business training, due to these qualifications imposed due to the Day Care of Children, Out of School Care locally have and are losing some good managers who have seen their clubs through thick and thin and this will only continue under these guidelines. Unfortunately, sometimes a piece of paper is taken for granted and experience means nothing."

"Skills to do with managing/leading a staff team (employment law; disciplinary procedures; financial skills for running the accounts)."

"The SSSC requirement of a degree is something that pushes staff out of the sector. Having to attend this course means missing days each week from being in the club and losing out on income. Once qualified the expectation of a staff member salary who is degree qualified is not sustainable for affordable childcare providers. This results on many staff moving onto other roles within local authorities or elsewhere continuing the cycle of staff retention."

"Yes, it's too early years based. Not enough for older children development. For example young people's health and mental well-being, anorexia, autism, ADHD, looked after / care young people. Plus, business module would be helpful too. Policies. Leading and managing staff."

QUALIFICATIONS - Through your completion or current undertaking of a qualification, and aside from any professional development, has the qualification had any impact (positive/negative) on your personal life/development?

Most of the respondents talked about the negative impact it had on their work/life/family life balance, although for some there was a positive impact in terms of new skills gained and increased self-confidence. Some viewed it as a real personal achievement.

Below is a selection of the comments from respondents:

“At the time I was working towards my degree, my personal life was greatly impacted by the work required, and my mental health suffered greatly.”

“At the time it was once a week in the evening, it was an issue as I'm a single parent to 2 boys (1 with ASD). But after qualifying just the small raise in pay (but that was also disappointing, less than £1 difference to a playworker to a manager.”

“Having achieved my BA, it gave me a great reminder of what I am capable of and a nice boost.”

“I attended evening classes for many years, starting with the NC and finishing with the BA in Childhood Practice. This was a struggle as I also had many family responsibilities over these years with working full time and also the ill health of family members. Just as I submitted my last assignment, I became seriously ill myself (now recovered). However, I enjoyed attending classes, meeting and making friends with students from a variety of childcare sectors.”

“I do feel more confident knowing that I have completed my BA. Makes me feel like the responsibility of my job is more recognised.”

“I enjoyed it but found it stressful having to gain the qualification as well as working as I had already been doing the job for nearly 20 years although I found some of it had a good affect and I did learn new things I could implement.”

“I studied over the first 5 years of my daughter’s life and felt I missed out or was stressed due to course work.”

“It has made me think about things differently.”

“It is several years since I completed my qualification but I recall it was difficult to fit the time in as I was working 30 hours a week but expected to do 16 hours study. By the final year I just wanted it finished which meant that I was just ticking boxes and not making the most of it. It didn't feel that relevant by then especially as I felt it was too early years based.”

“More stress as I already work 40 - 45 hours per week and am expected to do 15 - 30 hours studying per week on top of that.”

“Personally I am exhausted. I work long hours to try and make sure our service has the staff and everything else needed to run and provide high quality for children. The qualification has no bearing or impact on the children I care for. They already get a great experience (as shown through inspections) and the qualification is not relevant to what I am doing. The only positive aspect of the qualification is that it will enable me to move on from the OSC sector and in to Early Years.”

“Positive as I am almost 50 but not academic I am more hands-on practical worker so I am proud of my achievements. Negative is the fact I’ve hardly had any time to myself the last 4 years between uni work plus ensuring the paperwork side at work is all up to date, then COVID hit so lots of stress to deal with.”

“Studying while working full time at the time then being made redundant and taking over a parent run club. This was a very stressful time and affected my family life the most. As my children are older, when studying I felt some research made me reflect on my parenting and has helped me with understanding the developing brain more and strategies that could help my teenage children.”

“The relief of having it completed is the many impact. Doing it, whilst running a service during the pandemic was pretty tough.”

“Undertaking my initial degree whilst raising three children was challenging however, I found all of my Higher Education so challenging and such hard work but ultimately very rewarding. I am currently on a huge learning curve in my new role as manager in OSC.”

“Yes, I am much more aware of challenges that my own children face, even as young adults. I am now better equipped to support my youngest son through his final year of high school.”

“Yes, it was a difficult time as I had to spend many late nights/early mornings fitting in the studying and i felt that my management of the service suffered in that I had to prioritise submitting essays over updating processes/policies and doing reviews with staff members, etc..”

QUALIFICATIONS - Do you have other qualifications which are not currently acceptable for registration as a worker in out of school care but you think should be? If so what is it/what are they, and why do you think they should be accepted?

Not many responses were received in relation to this question, however, below is a selection of the most relevant and complete responses:

“I think a wider range such as youth work, sport etc should all be valid.”

“BA Child and Youth Studies- learnt a lot in this degree about children, their learning and society which helps my understanding.”

“BA Educational Studies- I previously completed that with SVQ 3 & 4 Playwork and recognised that line-management course should have been ample. Applicants should be viewed on a case-by-case basis if their combined qualifications reach an adequate level.”

“Business Management Level 4 as budgeting and managing finances are important. We are a childcare service but we also have to balance Books.”

“I would have been happy to register with the SSSC; however they required that I embark on further study. I was told if I was registered with the GTCS, then no further study would be necessary. Of course, I opted not register with SSSC and remain with GTCS. Having worked so hard during my teaching career and achieving Masters I don't think further study at this level is necessary. However, every day is a learning day, as is CPD, so I have embarked on relevant CPD. and professional dialogue where I can.”

“I think Playwork qualifications need to be recognised for the sector.”

“Post Graduate Diploma in Art - I think art, along with music and sports qualifications bring so much to the play sector and they should be recognised.”

“Yes - BA Educational Studies. I studied primary teaching for 3.5 years - all of the same areas that are important for OSC; child development, attachment, interactions, assessment, planning. The SSSC do not accept this qualification.”

“Yes, I have an Hons Degree in Design and years of experience teaching in further education colleges and community based projects. My creativity and experience wer the reasons for being offered the job.”

PRACTITIONER - RESULTS IN FULL

103 responses

Female: 93 (90%)

Male: 9 (9%)

Prefer not to say: 1 (1%)

AGE (99 responses, 4 responses unknown)

Age range: 20 - 65

Median age: 41

Average age: 43

DISABILITY

Yes: 4 (4%)

No: 97 (94%)

Prefer not to say: 2 (2%)

Unknown: 0

ETHNICITY

White Scottish/English/Welsh/Northern Irish: 87 (84%)

Black/African/Caribbean/Black UK: Caribbean: 1 (1%)
 (1%) Scottish Asian: 1 (1%) German: 1 (1%)
 4 (4%)

White other: 3 (3%)

Mixed ethnic background: 3 (3%)
 Asian/Asian UK: Pakistani: 2 (2%)

Pakistani: 1
 Unknown:

SECTOR

Voluntary/3rd/Charitable: 48 (47%)

Private: 25 (24%)

Public: 27 (26%)

Don't know: 3 (3%)

Unknown: 0

SERVICE

Only OSC: 86 (83%)

Combined ELC & OSC: 17 (17%)

Unknown: 0

REGISTRATION

SSSC: 98 (95%)

GTCS: 0

Other: Not yet, 1 (1%)

Unknown: 4 (4%)

Do you see working in OSC as a career?

Yes: 75 (73%)

No: 12 (12%)

Unsure: 14 (14%)

Unknown: 2 (2%)

How satisfied are you in your job?

Very: 56 (54%)

Fairly: 38 (37%)

Not very: 4 (4%)

Dissatisfied: 3 (3%)

Unknown: 2 (2%)

Hours term-time per week (101 responses, 1 unknown & 1 relief staff)

Range: 7 – 40 hours

Median: 22 hours

Average: 22 hours

Hours holiday-time per week (103 responses)

(16 people don't work holidays. 16 responses unknown & 5 'varies' responses)

Range: 4 – 40 hours

Median: 25 hours

Average: 26 hours

SALARY PER HOUR (103 responses)

(14 responses unknown.)

Range: £4.15- £15

Median: £10.30

Average: £10.31

YEARS WORKING IN THE SECTOR (103 responses)

(9 responses, less than a year. 3 responses unknown)

Range: Less than a year – 31 years

Median: 8 years

Average: 9 years

COVID impact- experience of working during the pandemic. Currently how stressed do you feel? (103 responses)

Not at all stressed: 32 (31%)

Slightly stressed: 53 (51%)

Stressed: 10 (10%)

Very stressed: 5 (5%)

At breaking point: 2 (2%)

Unknown: 1 (1%)

COVID impact- experience of working during the pandemic. Currently how physically tired do you feel? (103 responses, 0 responses unknown)

Not at all tired: 25 (24%)

Slightly tired: 42 (41%)

Tired: 22 (21%)

Exhausted: 12 (12%)

At breaking point: 2 (2%)

Unknown: 0

COVID impact- experience of working during the pandemic. Currently how would you rate your mental wellbeing? (103 responses, 0 response unknown)

Great: 15 (15%)

Good: 39 (38%)

OK: 37 (36%)

Not very good: 9 (9%)

At breaking point: 3 (3%)

Unknown: 0

COVID impact- would you like to provide any further information about the answers you have just provided? (All answers will be treated in confidence and anonymised in final results, if used.)

Not all respondents answered this question but those that did detailed the ongoing difficulties and challenges they face as a result of the pandemic on their physical and mental health.

Below is a selection of the comments:

“At initial lockdown I was concerned about the spread of the virus. However, now that most people have received a vaccination I feel more confident that I will not be seriously ill if I contract COVID.”

“I’m recovering from having COVID hence I’m exhausted.”

“My bosses seem very stressed and fed up. They get stressed and stay like that and everything is a major hassle for them. It’s like it’s all too much.”

“Not work related but I suffer from health anxiety and so my mental health was impacted very badly struggling to cover staff absences due to COVID i.e. self-isolation or off with the virus- expected to run a setting with no staff.”

“The COVID impact is getting better now but at points where I was one of very few staff working during the pandemic I was fully at breaking point and still trying to recover now.”

“The OSC service I worked in for almost 5 years had to close 2 weeks ago due to not recovering financially from COVID. We had the dreadful task of having to relocate all our families and find new jobs ourselves as well.”

“Due to the disability I have which is a rare genetic skin condition, I suffer lots of sensitivity. My condition has worsened since the pandemic began because of the extra cleaning and hygiene measures we have had to have in place. I worked during lockdowns and did extra hours because other staff had been off isolating or shielding and it’s taken its toll on me physically and mentally. I was also due to have started my SVQ in 2020 but again COVID restrictions meant I have only been able to start it now. I worried about not getting re registered with the SSSC and now I am feeling unsure if it’s the right thing to do because I am feeling so tired and stressed out with my day to day working life.”

In general, what is the best thing about working in OSC?

Overwhelmingly the most common answer was in relation to working with children; this also included seeing them having fun, playing, developing and learning. Some respondents also specified that they

enjoyed working with primary-age children rather than younger ones; often people also talked about the importance of the relationships that are developed with the children and families.

Some respondents specifically mentioned that the job was rewarding, fun, and always changing.

A small number of respondents also indicated that the part-time hours suited their family life and other additional caring responsibilities.

Below is a selection of the comments:

“Fast pace; challenging; chance to continually develop.”

“I love working with the children. I like helping them learn things and develop their skills and confidence. I like watching them grow and change. I used to want to be a teacher but I feel as a childcare practitioner that I have a closer more personal relationship with the children compared to what teachers can do. I like that we are all about play and fun and learning. Not just learning. I enjoy talking to the kids as they will always make me smile and forget my troubles while I’m at work. I enjoy the fact we work in schools as I think it strengthens our relationship with the teachers and the children.”

“The connections you make with the children and families is truly the best part. Seeing the children grow and develop while having fun is also a bonus.”

“The variety of play experiences we can provide to the children of all ages and to see them achieve so much as learn through play is a wonderful feeling. Also having the amazing support of the team within the club where I'm based makes working in the club that bit more enjoyable.”

“Working in a team means usually when you aren't certain of something you can ask others and you don't have to worry, also working with children is brilliant.”

In general, what is the biggest challenge about working in OSC?

There was not one main challenge, however there was a significant number of different ones highlighted, which included: children’s behaviour and engaging older children; financial issues/sustainability; paperwork; pay, conditions and hours of work; lack of space and shared premises; staffing issues (including recruitment and retention), and more general issues around service delivery during the current pandemic.

Below is a selection of the comments:

“All the extra paperwork that does not necessarily improve the children’s experience.”

“Applications for funding grants! Parents still working from home just now.”

“At present, financial challenges due to COVID and also changes to how we work. Prior to COVID-challenging behaviour and also not being considered ‘important’ by the school.”

“Challenges around supporting children with emotional regulation. There has been a fallout for children’s emotional social development and needs since lockdown, bubbles and having to isolate if need be.”

“Children who are challenging or very negative in their behaviour. Setting is always busy so issues can make days stressful.”

“Don’t think there are difficult challenges but challenges more with children with difficulties such as autism and global delays but every day is different.”

“I would like to spend more time with the children but have to keep on top of the amount of paperwork involved. It can be challenging because it is a hectic job. We constantly have children arriving or leaving and that can be difficult to build relationships with some children who may only be in the club for a short time. We also have a lot of paperwork to do and we don’t always have the time to do it while the children are there. Lots of them need a lot of our attention and we can’t turn a child away because we have a load of repetitive paperwork to complete. I think we also have a lot of training for the hours we actually work. The split shifts can be challenging and the shortage of staff at times means you sometimes have to go to another club which can be annoying. I get anxious going to new place and would like to stay at my base all the time. I understand staff get sick etc but it can be frustrating travelling longer to go to a new club at times. Even through our full-time hours are 22.5 per week it can often feel like I have worked double that because of travelling and training in-between shifts. I travel 56 miles a day to work and back and I sometimes wonder if it’s worth it?”

“Keeping up to date with changes in protocol, and thinking of different play and entertainment for children with all abilities, strengths or weaknesses.”

“Pay, hours and expectations from Care Inspectorate, government, SSSC- incompatible with hours and pay.”

“The changes implanted due to COVID have made day to day work challenging has impacted on how the club is run. I feel this has an impact on staff and children.”

If you could change one thing about working in OSC, what would it be?

Although a handful of responses indicated that they wouldn’t change anything about working in OSC, the most common responses related to better pay and conditions; more hours of work; less paperwork; better professional recognition and status; additional financial support, and for services to have their own premises.

Below is a selection of comments from respondents:

“A better wage for the work we do, we are all qualified and feel the wage is not great as we are on the same scale as janitor and cleaners who don't need a qualification for what they do.”

“Employ more staff so that we can provide better quality care for the children. Raise wages to reflect the working demands on staff.”

“I love my job- i wouldn’t change it at all.”

QUALIFICATIONS - Do you have the appropriate qualification for your job?

Yes: 79 (77%)

No: 7 (7%)

No but working towards it: 13 (13%)

No and not working towards it: 2 (2%)

Unknown: 2 (2%)

QUALIFICATIONS - What impact has the learning from the required qualification (completed or underway) had/is having on your practice?

Of those who responded to this question, most of the responses were positive and described how it has built confidence in their day-to-day practice, and it helps with completing paperwork and developing/understanding policies and procedures.

Below is a selection of comments from respondents:

“A great insight into practice and frameworks within ELC and how this can be adapted. Reflection on own practices.”

“Doing the learning has given me a better understanding of my roles and responsibilities in terms of child protection etc, and it also aided me in my understanding of how to help the children grow and develop.”

“It enabled me to be less stressed at work because I understand my role better.”

“It has allowed me to refer back to it on multiple occasions during situations within my workplace.”

“It has been massively important during this pandemic recovery.”

QUALIFICATIONS - Is there anything missing from the qualification which you think would be beneficial to know?

The majority of respondents to this question said that ‘nothing’ was missing from the qualifications. Others however said they would like qualifications to cover attachment theory; conflict resolution, and also specific information around supporting children with ASN including autism, Aspergers and dyspraxia. A number of respondents also mentioned they would like to be able to better support children and staff around mental/emotional health issues; one respondent described this like ‘mental health first aid’.

QUALIFICATIONS - Through your completion or current undertaking of a qualification, and aside from any professional development, has the qualification had any impact (positive/negative) on your personal life/development?

Although the majority of respondents said that undertaking the qualification had been positive not only in their OSC practice but also in their wider family relationships, about a third said that it had either had no impact or a negative one on their life. In these instances, most indicated that it was hard to balance work, study and family life, and in some instances the pressures were too great meaning people discontinued with the qualification.

Below is a selection of comments from respondents:

“I have only just begun the SVQ but I also moved house at the same time because my relationship broke down. The past two years were awful at home and I’m not feeling confident about doing the SVQ just now as I feel I’m too stressed and tired from life itself as well as COVID and work!”

“It has given me more confidence in my family life, as in being a parent and grandparent.”

“It has had a positive impact on my development towards being a primary teacher.”

“It's pretty in depth but I am up for the challenge and happy to develop my career further.”

“Positive: this qualification has helped me return to work after a long stint at home caring for my own children. It has also enabled me to achieve my dream of working with children and given me a solid foundation of education to inform my practice.”

“Taken a lot of time out of my personal life, but worth it.”

QUALIFICATIONS - Do you have other qualifications which are not currently acceptable for registration as a worker in out of school care but you think should be? If so what is it/what are they, and why do you think they should be accepted?

Not many suggestions were provided here although one respondent said that they would like Youth and Community Work/Community Education qualifications to be recognised.

A few respondents thought that there shouldn't be any qualification requirements or that these should be at a lower level.

SUPPORT WORKER - RESULTS IN FULL

59 responses*

(*Due to the number of responses being less than 100, the percentages attached are only an indicative figure- greater accuracy requires 100 responses or more.)

Female: 48 (81%)

Male: 11 (19%)

Prefer not to say: 0

AGE

(59 responses, 0 responses unknown)

Age range: 15 - 64

Median age: 31

Average age: 38

DISABILITY

Yes: 4 (4%)

No: 97 (94%)

Prefer not to say: 2 (2%)

Unknown: 0

ETHNICITY

White Scottish/English/Welsh/Northern Irish: 53 (90%)

Asian/Asian UK: Pakistani: 3 (5%)

Unknown: 3 (5%)

SECTOR

Voluntary/3rd/Charitable: 44 (75%)

Private: 7 (14%)

Public: 5 (10%)

Don't know: 2 (4%)

Unknown: 1 (1%)

SERVICE

Only OSC: 55 (93%)

Combined ELC & OSC: 4 (7%)

Unknown: 0

REGISTRATION

SSSC: 51 (86%)

GTCS: 0

Not registered: 6 (10%)

Unknown: 2 (3%)

Do you see working in OSC as a career?

Yes: 29 (49%)

No: 9 (15%)

Unsure: 20 (34%)

Unknown: 1 (1%)

How satisfied are you in your job?

Very: 35 (59%)

Fairly: 23 (39%)

Not very: 0

Dissatisfied: 1 (1%)

Unknown: 0

Hours term-time per week (59 responses)

Range: 4- 32.5

Median: 17.5

Average: 17.5

Hours holiday-time per week (59 responses)

(6 responses unknown, 2 'varies' responses, 7 people don't work holidays)

Range: 4 – 40 hours

Median: 22

Average: 22

SALARY PER HOUR (59 responses)

(14 responses unknown.)

Range: £5 - £18.95

Median: £9.45

Average: £9.45

YEARS WORKING IN THE SECTOR (59 responses)

(19 responses, 'less than a year'. 1 response unknown)

Range: Less than a year – 26 years

Median: 3 years

Average: 6 years

COVID impact- experience of working during the pandemic. **Currently how stressed do you feel?** (59 responses)

Not at all stressed: 24 (41%)

Slightly stressed: 24 (41%)

Stressed: 7 (12%)

Very stressed: 0

At breaking point: 1 (2%)

Unknown: 3 (5%)

COVID impact- experience of working during the pandemic. **Currently how physically tired do you feel? (59 responses)**

Not at all tired: 17 (29%)

Slightly tired: 28 (47%)

Tired: 9 (15%)

Exhausted: 2 (3%)

At breaking point: 1 (2%)

Unknown: 2 (3%)

COVID impact- experience of working during the pandemic. **Currently how would you rate your mental wellbeing? (103 responses)**

Great: 7 (12%)

Good: 31 (53%)

OK: 16 (27%)

Not very good: 2 (3%)

At breaking point: 1 (2%)

Unknown: 2 (3%)

COVID impact- would you like to provide any further information about the answers you have just provided? (All answers will be treated in confidence and anonymised in final results, if used.)

Of those who replied to this question, it was mostly highlighting general stresses about working at the present time including insufficient staff and changing or unclear guidance.

Below is a selection of comments from respondents:

“Changing guidance makes me feel unsure I’m doing everything right.”

“I am somewhat anxious about catching COVID however it does not prevent me from going about daily life.”

“I exercise daily to help with stress and this has helped a great deal.”

In general, what is the best thing about working in OSC?

The most common response focused on working with children: seeing them learn and develop, and building relationships with them, which made it a fun job. A small number of respondents said that the hours of work suited them.

Below is a selection of comments from respondents:

“Having the experience of working with and building relationships with children of all age and stage.”

“It’s good fun working with the children, very satisfying. Also this is a second job it fits in well with my current employment.”

“The chat and social aspect. Love interacting and talking to the children and seeing them have fun. It is always a positive and friendly atmosphere.”

In general, what is the biggest challenge about working in OSC?

Children’s behaviour and managing behaviour were the most common responses to this question. A small number of respondents talked about pay, hours of work and staffing issues.

Below is a selection of comments from respondents.

“Children can often bring whatever negative experiences they’ve had at school to OSC and it can be challenging to try and encourage children to see OSC staff as a separate entity to school.”

“Working with all different ages and meeting all different needs.”

“Working with different age groups- often the older groups don’t want to play.”

“Learning how to work with different types of children and knowing each day could be different to the last.”

If you could change one thing about working in OSC, what would it be?

The main responses related to better pay and conditions; better professional recognition and the service having their own space or premises.

Below is a selection of comments from respondents.

“Schools and their teaching staff should be encouraged to work alongside OSC where possible, showing respect for the work that OSC staff do and the support they provide to children and their families.”

“Moving to our own room- warmer, have our own wall displays etc.”

“I would have one-on-one with our special needs children.”

QUALIFICATIONS - do you have the appropriate qualification for your job?

Yes: 30 (51%)

No: 6 (10%)

No but working towards it: 12 (20%)

No and not working towards it: 5 (8%)

Unknown: 6 (10%)

QUALIFICATIONS - What impact has the learning from the required qualification (completed or underway) had/is having on your practice?

Most of the responses were positive.

Below is a selection of comments from respondents:

“Currently training to be a teacher- UG Primary Education – understanding the importance of play and child-led learning. Using choice to understand what each child likes.”

“It has encouraged me to use the skills that I have in practice and helps me recognise my strengths and weaknesses.”

“It has given me a new perspective and insight allowing me to improve my skills and do my job effectively.”

“The SVQ qualification helps me better understand children’s play, policies and playwork in general.”

QUALIFICATIONS - Is there anything missing from the qualification which you think would be beneficial to know?

Few responses were received for this question.

Below is a comment from a respondent:

“I feel like getting out there and learning as you go is best. Nothing can prepare you.”

QUALIFICATIONS - Through your completion or current undertaking of a qualification, and aside from any professional development, has the qualification had any impact (positive/negative) on your personal life/development?

Roughly half of those who responded to this question found it a positive experience whilst half found it a negative one. On the positive, respondents said it has boosted their self-confidence and self-esteem but those who have found it to be negative highlighted the difficulty in balancing work, life and study, and in addition, questioned the relevance of the qualifications.

Below is a selection of comments from respondents:

“Absolutely negatively but not so much the qualification but the need to gain it. Before my current job as a support worker, I worked as a Lead Practitioner in another out of school club. I was in my role for nearly 13 years as a peripatetic manager, I had two choice pathways to gain the required qualification, and the one I chose (in my opinion) was more geared towards nurseries, family centres, etc. I managed one year doing my qualification before I had to drop out because of family circumstances. My registration was running out in July 2020 and by that time I was to have my qualification. I didn’t have it so the committee at the time gave me my 12 weeks’ notice right at the start of COVID (March 2020) and I had to leave a job I loved doing. I have struggled massively with losing my job, not only personally but financially.”

“I have found it quite difficult at times due to my lack of experience in the job.”

“It is a balancing act juggling work, toddler and qualification but manageable.”

“My qualifications help my personal life specifically when it comes to supporting younger family members with development and additional support needs, and how to better understand their complex needs.”

QUALIFICATIONS - Do you have other qualifications which are not currently acceptable for registration as a worker in out of school care but you think should be? If so, what is it/what are they, and why do you think they should be accepted?

Few responses were received for this question.

Below is a selection of comments from respondents:

“Any care based qualifications, not necessarily with a child focus. It will definitely encourage more caring and compassionate people into the sector.”

“I think all staff should be subject to completing more mental health training.”

APPENDIX

1. What is your gender?

Male Female Transgender Non-binary Other (please state) Prefer not to say

2. What is your age?

3. Do you have a registered disability?

Yes No Prefer not to answer

4. What is your ethnic background?

5. In which local authority is your work based?

6. Is the OSC you work in based in the voluntary/3rd/charitable, private or public sector?

Voluntary/3rd/charitable sector Private sector Public sector Don't know

7. Does your service deliver only OSC or combined Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) and OSC?

Only OSC Combined ELC & OSC

8. Are you registered with the SSSC (or GTCS or another professional registration body)?

SSSC GTCS Another Not registered

9. In which SSSC job category does your job belong?

Lead Practitioner Practitioner Support Worker

10. Do you see working in OSC as a career?

Yes No Unsure

11. How satisfied are you in your job?

Very Fairly Not very Dissatisfied

12. How many hours per week do you work term-time?

13. How many hours per weeks do you work holiday-time/in-service days?

14. What is your pay per hour?

15. To the nearest year how long have you been working in OSC? (If less than a year say 'less than a year')

16. COVID impact- experience of working during the pandemic. Currently how stressed do you feel?

Not at all Slightly stressed Stressed Very stressed At breaking point

17. COVID impact- experience of working during the pandemic. Currently how physically tired do you feel?

Not at all Slightly tired Tired Exhausted At breaking point

18. COVID impact- experience of working during the pandemic. Currently how would you rate your mental wellbeing?

Great Good OK Not very good At breaking point

19. COVID impact- would you like to provide any further information about the answers you have just provided? (All answers will be treated in confidence and anonymised in final results, if used.)

20. In general, what is the best thing about working in OSC?

21. In general, what is the biggest challenge about working in OSC?

22. If you could change one thing about working in OSC, what would it be?

QUALIFICATIONS

Currently the main qualifications for each job category are as follow:

LEAD PRACTITIONER:

BA Childhood Practice/SQA Professional Development Award Childhood Practice (360 credits at SCQF Level 9)/Postgraduate Diploma in Childhood Practice

Full list of acceptable qualifications: <https://www.sssc.uk.com/knowledgebase/article/KA-02523/en-us>

PRACTITIONER

SVQ Social Services (Children and Young People) SCQF Level 7/HNC Childhood Practice

Full list of acceptable qualifications: <https://www.sssc.uk.com/knowledgebase/article/KA-02524/en-us>

SUPPORT WORKER

National Certificate Early Education and Childcare/ Any practice qualification in the practitioner category/ SVQ Social Services (Children and Young People) SCQF Level 6

Full list of acceptable qualifications: <https://www.sssc.uk.com/knowledgebase/article/KA-02525/en-us>

23. Do you currently possess the appropriate qualification for your job?

Yes No No but currently working towards it No and not currently working towards it

24. What impact has the learning from the required qualification (completed or underway) had/is having on your practice?

25. Is there anything missing from the qualifications which you think would be good for your job?

26. Through your completion or current undertaking of a qualification, and aside from any professional development, has the qualification had any impact (positive/negative) on your personal life/development?

27. Do you have other qualifications which are not currently acceptable for registration as a worker in out of school care but you think should be? If so what is it/what are they, and why do you think they should be accepted?