



## **OSC in Scotland- draft framework consultation**

**December 2019**

Giving all children in Scotland an equal chance to flourish is at the heart of everything we do. By bringing together a network of people working with and for children, alongside children and young people themselves, we offer a broad, balanced and independent voice. We create solutions, provide support and develop positive change across all areas affecting children in Scotland. We do this by listening, gathering evidence, and applying and sharing our learning, while always working to uphold children's rights. Our range of knowledge and expertise means we can provide trusted support on issues as diverse as the people we work with and the varied lives of children and families in Scotland.

We welcome the opportunity to inform the discussion on the development of the Out of School Care (OSC) framework and believe that there are significant opportunities to further children's rights. We have drawn on our experience of project activities in relation to early learning and childcare (ELC). Children in Scotland leads the Childcare and Nurture Glasgow East (CHANGE) project and we will be drawing on the project findings throughout this document.<sup>1</sup> The project works with communities in Glasgow East to develop childcare services in the area. The project focuses on expanding services across the area including OSC. The CHANGE team is submitting a response in collaboration with Glasgow Centre for Population Health (GCPH) which we will also refer to throughout our response.

We would like to highlight our response to question 10 in particular as evidence shows that there is a significant way to go to make OSC provision across Scotland inclusive. We have drawn on our extensive experience of working with children and young people and families through our additional support needs services (Enquire, Resolve, My Rights, My Say) and projects to suggest where this framework could support improvement for children with additional support needs.

One of Children in Scotland's key strategic priorities is to champion the participation and inclusion of all children and young people. We are pleased

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<sup>1</sup> <http://change-childcare.org/about-us/>

that engagement work with children and young people has taken place to inform the development of this framework and that their voices are present throughout. However, we would emphasise that engagement work needs to be carried out with children with additional support needs. We would encourage engagement with children and young people to be ongoing in order to continue to develop this policy area.

### **1. What range of services are needed:**

Please tick all that apply.

Regulated OSC

Childminders

Activity-based clubs and programmes (such as sports clubs, creative arts clubs, outdoor activities)

Other

If other, please specify.

### **Can you tell us why these services are important?**

The number of children registered in OSC services was around 53,600 (not including holiday playschemes) in 2018.<sup>2</sup> This number has been steadily increasing since 2014. Children in Scotland welcomes the Scottish Government's commitment to producing a new framework for OSC and investment of £3 million via the Access to Childcare Fund to help expand services.

We believe that high quality OSC services can have a positive impact on children and their families. This is particularly relevant to families impacted by poverty. International evidence suggests that OSC can benefit children experiencing disadvantage in a number of ways including: opportunities to experience play; feeling safe; social interaction; increased confidence; health benefits through food and physical exercise and enhance learning opportunities.<sup>3</sup>

However, we would highlight that we are uncomfortable with the framework suggesting that "families lift themselves out of poverty" as this places the responsibility on families rather than public bodies. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) sets out the fundamental rights of children and young people. It recognises the role that parent and families have in supporting children's rights and that the

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<sup>2</sup><https://www.careinspectorate.com/images/documents/5271/Early%20learning%20and%20childcare%20statistics%202018.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> The Assessment of the Benefits and Costs of OSC 2003

best interests of the child are achieved by supporting families and placing obligations on governments to invest in supporting families.<sup>4</sup> We therefore recommend that the wording of the framework is altered in regard to out of school care's potential role in reducing child poverty.

We are pleased that the Scottish Government has committed to full and direct incorporation of the UNCRC by 2022.<sup>5</sup> Incorporation will help support children's rights to be fully realised. As such, OSC provision should be underpinned by a child rights-based approach as provision can help support the fulfilment of these rights. Many articles within the convention are relevant to OSC. These include but are not limited to:

- Article 18 (support for parents)
- Article 3 (best interests of the child)
- Article 31 (play)
- Article 23 (support for children with a disability)
- Article 28 (education)
- Article 12 (having a say in decisions)

Article 18 highlights that states should provide support to parents/carers to ensure that they are able to operate in the best interests of the child. Accessing childcare and enjoying the benefits associated is one of the rights for all children. As a result, OSC opportunities should be accessible and available to all children.

"State parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that children of working parents have the right to benefit from child-care services and facilities for which they are eligible."<sup>6</sup>

The right to relax and play has been highlighted as an important right for children and young people. Children in Scotland held a children's rights discussion day to inform the consultation on incorporation of the UNCRC. We heard from children that they did not feel there are as many opportunities within school to engage in play, particularly as they progress through school.<sup>7</sup> They suggested that children should be given "**more free opportunities to take part in sport and leisure activities.**"<sup>7</sup> The provision of affordable play opportunities by OSC services will help to realise this right.

The right to play is outlined within the Play Strategy for Scotland: Our Vision.<sup>8</sup> Access to play within the community is highlighted within the strategy including: out of school services, playschemes, afterschool clubs and

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<sup>4</sup> [https://www.togetherscotland.org.uk/pdfs/UNCRC\\_parenting\\_23-04-2018\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.togetherscotland.org.uk/pdfs/UNCRC_parenting_23-04-2018_FINAL.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/news/strengthening-childrens-rights/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CRC.aspx>

<sup>7</sup> <https://childrenscotland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/CiS-UNCRC-report.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www2.gov.scot/resource/0042/00425722.pdf>

holiday clubs. OSC settings are also identified as providing children and young people with key opportunities including the chance to engage in outdoor play.

## 2. What can we do to support community-based approaches to delivering OSC?

Part 8 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 (Part 3) places a duty on local authorities to consult with “such persons as appear to be representative” of parents of young children and school aged “children in need” about how they should provide day care and OSC services.<sup>9</sup> It is also important that OSC services are involved in any engagement around the development of the Children’s Services Plan.

We believe that tailored out of school services which meet local needs involve going beyond consultation to co-design and co-production. Partnership with children and young people, families and the local community would enable OSC services to work more effectively and meet local needs.<sup>10</sup> Empowering individuals and communities to shape the services they receive is one of the four principles of the Christie Commission (2011)<sup>11</sup> and we believe these principles should also be applied in the context of out of school care provision.

We would also highlight that the majority of out of school services are currently managed by parent committees, charitable or independent organisations.<sup>12</sup> Communities often lie at the heart of these services and as a result more work is required to ensure they are supported and sustainable. However, we would highlight that concentrated work needs to take place to build capacity within more areas experiencing disadvantage.

It is important that special attention is given to include groups that experience multiple and complex barriers to accessing services. These include but are not limited to: asylum seeker and refugee families; kinship carers; parents under 25; parents/carers of children with additional support needs; parents/carers with additional support needs and families

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/advice-and-guidance/2016/12/statutory-guidance-part-3-childrens-services-planning-children-young-people/documents/00512307-pdf/00512307-pdf/govscot%3Adocument/00512307.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> [http://www.parliament.scot/S4\\_EducationandCultureCommittee/Children%20and%20Young%20People%20\(Scotland\)%20Bill/ScottishOutofSchoolCareNetwork.pdf](http://www.parliament.scot/S4_EducationandCultureCommittee/Children%20and%20Young%20People%20(Scotland)%20Bill/ScottishOutofSchoolCareNetwork.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/commission-future-delivery-public-services/pages/6/>

<sup>12</sup> [http://www.parliament.scot/S4\\_EducationandCultureCommittee/Children%20and%20Young%20People%20\(Scotland\)%20Bill/ScottishOutofSchoolCareNetwork.pdf](http://www.parliament.scot/S4_EducationandCultureCommittee/Children%20and%20Young%20People%20(Scotland)%20Bill/ScottishOutofSchoolCareNetwork.pdf)

experiencing poverty. Engaging and empowering these groups in the beginning will enable potential barriers to be identified and addressed at the design stage.

However, it is important to recognise that engaging with these groups takes time. Meaningful engagement is underpinned by relationships. Consequently, “buy in” is required from community organisations that have well established relationships with these groups. It is also vital that relationships are built with statutory services which can reach families who struggle to engage with community or third sector services.

The CHANGE project seeks to build a model of childcare provision which is based on community need and best interests of the child.<sup>13</sup> The CHANGE Hub model was recently shortlisted for Most Inspiring or Innovative project award at the 2019 Improvement Collaborative Awards. The model brings together 37 individuals representing 26 organisations within the local area to help address the barriers that families face when accessing childcare services. Critically play services are involved in the Hub which has brought key learning opportunities for all services working with children and families.

We believe this type of model could be replicated to meet the different childcare needs (including OSC) within local areas. This type of model ensures that schools, OSC, community organisations and other partners identify existing provision and make new connections. This approach helps to identify duplication in order to redirect resources to help fill gaps in existing provision. We encourage the Scottish Government to identify and share models of best practice to support community-based approaches. These services are often working with the same children, and a children and families approach should be adopted rather than a service-led approach.

Leadership and investment is required within local areas to help coordinate and enable a fully realised community-based approach. Capacity building is required to ensure that these partnership models will be successful and sustainable.

Additionally, through our Foods, Families, Futures (FFF) project we have supported local partnerships to deliver food provision during the holiday period. The focus of FFF is on community-driven, dignified and sustainable approaches to tackling food poverty during the school holidays whilst providing children and families opportunities to access play and learning.<sup>14</sup> We would like to identify the clear link between food and out of school provision. We will explore this in more detail in question 14. However, we would like to highlight that the FFF model focuses on facilitating the delivery

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<sup>13</sup> [https://childreninscotland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/ELC\\_Service\\_Model.pdf](https://childreninscotland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/ELC_Service_Model.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> [https://childreninscotland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Future-Food-Inquiry\\_Final.pdf](https://childreninscotland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Future-Food-Inquiry_Final.pdf)

of community-based approaches. The shape and development of the FFF clubs varies across Scotland. The models are dependent upon the needs and local partners and as such the approaches taken differ.<sup>15</sup> We strongly recommend therefore that OSC services are designed in partnership with local communities in order to reduce barriers and increase uptake of services.

### **3. What name should we use for the range of out of school services and activities? Is there a better term than 'OSC'?**

We note that discussion within the framework suggests that the term 'school' can be off putting for children attending the service.<sup>16</sup> Indi Youth service operating in the East End of Glasgow emphasises that the young people attending (P7-S4) do not want 'OSC' but instead a space where they can feel independent and relax.**Error! Bookmark not defined.**

We would encourage consultation and engagement with children on the name or term which should be given to the range of services and activities included under the definition of 'OSC'.

We would like to highlight the point expressed by the Scottish OSC Network, which emphasises that many services have 'unique' names "chosen with the children, or relating to their locality or purpose".<sup>17</sup> If parents, families, children and the community are clear about the purpose and remit of the service then we do not think it is necessary for the service to be formally called OSC.

### **4. To enable us to realise our vision, we have identified three key aims that we will need to achieve –**

- 1. High-quality services which provide children with life-enhancing experiences*
- 2. OSC is accessible and affordable and meets the needs of children and young people, parents and carers and communities.*

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<sup>15</sup> [https://childreninscotland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/FFF\\_CiSMMainReport\\_2017\\_FINAL\\_28.6.182.pdf](https://childreninscotland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/FFF_CiSMMainReport_2017_FINAL_28.6.182.pdf)

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/out-school-care-scotland-draft-framework-2019/>

<sup>17</sup> [https://soscn.org/downloads/consultations/Consultation\\_on\\_the\\_Draft\\_National\\_Framework\\_for\\_Out\\_of\\_School\\_Care\\_SOSCN\\_Response.pdf](https://soscn.org/downloads/consultations/Consultation_on_the_Draft_National_Framework_for_Out_of_School_Care_SOSCN_Response.pdf)

3. OSC services are embedded in communities and enable children and young people to access a range of spaces including the outdoors.

**Do you agree with our 3 key aims for a future OSC framework?**

Yes. The provision of high-quality services is key to ensuring that children and young people are supported with their development. OSC, similar to ELC, can have benefits for children whose home environments may not be able to fully meet their nurturing and development needs. We agree with all the identified action points for achieving this aim and will expand on these in further questions.

We agree that OSC services need to be accessible and affordable. Parents and families must have access to the service and allow children and young people the opportunity to experience the benefits of the provision. The cost of OSC provision remains one of the key barriers for families to access these services.<sup>18</sup> It is important that children and young people with additional support needs have the same opportunities to experience OSC services. This will require additional resource and support and training for staff working in these settings. We will explore this in more detail in question 10.

As has been discussed in question 2, we believe involving communities in the co-design and co-production of services will ensure that these services help to meet the needs of children and young people, families and the local community. We think emphasis needs to be placed on reaching those groups who face significant and complex barriers to accessing services. There is a gap in provision for children with additional support needs and as a result there needs to be an increase in accessible and inclusive services based within both schools and the community settings.

We would also reiterate the point expressed in the response from the Scottish Out of School Care Network that “low cost or free access to public spaces and, indoors and out, is essential”<sup>19</sup> We believe that OSC services should be designed in response to community need. This requires that a range of different resources (including free or affordable access to public spaces) should be in place to ensure that these models can be accommodated.

**5. How can we help to ensure that all families have access to an OSC place for their child/ren if they want it?**

<sup>18</sup> OSC in Scotland- who uses it and why? Parenting Across Scotland (PAS) 2018

<sup>19</sup>[https://soscn.org/downloads/consultations/Consultation\\_on\\_the\\_Draft\\_National\\_Framework\\_for\\_Out\\_of\\_School\\_Care\\_SOSCN\\_Response.pdf](https://soscn.org/downloads/consultations/Consultation_on_the_Draft_National_Framework_for_Out_of_School_Care_SOSCN_Response.pdf)

Provision of OSC services is inconsistent across Scotland. Limited supply of services restricts choice for families, "People cannot use facilities that are not there."<sup>18</sup> As a result, it is important that efforts are made to help support the expansion of provision in areas where children and families are most likely to benefit. It has been highlighted that many clubs are run by parent committees which primarily operate in areas of higher socio-economic status. As a result, it is important that efforts are made to build community capacity within areas of need. Additionally, there also needs to be a greater focus on designing services to support children with additional support needs as we know that services do not have the capacity or trained staff to support all children.

As has been noted, cost is one of the key challenges for families and children to access OSC. This will be covered throughout and more specifically in our answer to question 8.

## **6. What do children and young people want from OSC services and does this differ dependent on age?**

As stated in question 1, the UNCRC enshrines children's right to express their views and be taken seriously regarding all matters that affect them. Article 12 is one of the General Principles of the UNCRC which underpins the interpretation and implementation of all other rights. We are aware that certain groups, including younger age groups and those with additional support needs, are often left out of engagement processes.<sup>20</sup> As such we think it is important to highlight the importance of engaging with these groups to inform the ongoing development of this policy area.

As part of the CHANGE project, we undertook engagement work with 30 children aged between 4-12 to find out what children wanted from childcare services in their area. Some of the children we spoke to had been to OSC whilst others had not. Choice was important to the children to whom we spoke. Children said that they would like to attend formal OSC because: "**OSC has lots of activities, but at clubs you can only do one thing.**"<sup>21</sup> Children highlighted that they wanted to access lots of different types of activities. They felt it was important that new resources and activities were provided regularly.

The children described a range of both indoor and outdoor activities they would like to have the opportunity to take part in. These included: arts and crafts, sports (football, basketball and tennis), playing on games consoles, music, dancing, playing at the park, reading and learning, cooking and access to food and themed days and celebrations.

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.togetherscotland.org.uk/pdfs/TogetherReport2016.pdf>

<sup>21</sup> Summary of Engagement with Schools CHANGE 2017/2018



### **“sports help you feel energised and healthy”**

As a result, it is important that service provide children with a range of activities in order for them to feel empowered and given a sense of autonomy over their experience.

We often hear from children and young people the importance of having positive relationships with practitioners. They often identify the importance of practitioners being kind, non-judgemental, trustworthy and good at listening.<sup>22</sup> Children want adults that work with them to take the time to get to know them. Children we spoke to through the CHANGE project told us that adults need to listen to them and allow them to have opinions.<sup>21</sup>

Practitioners were also viewed as playing a role in helping to support children's emotional wellbeing. For example, staff played a role in helping to comfort children when they were upset **“be calming and soothing”** as well as **“making them feel good”**.<sup>23</sup> This is something that was also highlighted by children in the Care Inspectorate Review of Children's OSC Experiences. As a result, it is important that staff recruited to OSC embody these qualities and are supported to provide the appropriate emotional supports to children.

**“Sometimes I like to just sit and relax and just have a wee chat after school. I can do that if I want to, which is good. I was just having a chat with [staff] there to talk about things that are happening at school.”** Error! Bookmark not defined.

Children perceive OSC staff as people who can help children **“fix problems”**.<sup>21</sup> Children felt they could speak to staff if they were worried about something, as such it was important that there was a quiet space within the service for this.

**“We are all friends, we normally play together, we have this chart of seven things to do when you are feeling sad or angry, one of the things is you can go and chill.”**<sup>24</sup>

Mental health support for children and young people is often identified as a key area of concern for many children and young people. For example, mental health was the focus of the Scottish Youth Parliament's 2016 campaign.

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<sup>22</sup> <https://childreninscotland.org.uk/childrens-voice-at-heart-of-new-participation-and-engagement-guidelines/>

<sup>23</sup> Summary of Engagement with Children at Connect 2 OSC Bridgeton, CHANGE, 2019

<sup>24</sup> <https://hub.careinspectorate.com/media/3465/out-of-school-care-review-of-childrens-experiences-march-2019.pdf>

Children in Scotland undertook a consultation with children under the age of 12 to inform the development of the Mental Health Strategy 2017-2027. We heard from children that close personal relationships and opportunities to access play were key factors in helping to support their wellbeing. Both of which children feel they can access from OSC.

Staff working within the OSC sector need to be supported in how to take on the views of children and young people, in order to understand and identify their needs. We recommend that staff working in OSC are given access to additional training and support on mental health.

## 7. What different activities or provision might secondary school aged children want?

Children in Scotland has not undertaken any specific engagement work with secondary age groups surrounding OSC provision. However, we can draw on findings from other organisation's engagement with this age range, such as that undertaken by Indi Youth (an out of school service based in Castlemilk, Glasgow).<sup>25</sup>

We would reiterate that OSC can provide young people with a place to speak to trusted adults in a safe and supported space.

**“Sometimes we have time to talk but sometimes the little ones always get us to play, they are littler than us, we like to talk more.”**Error! Bookmark not defined.

It is also important that young people have the opportunity to choose what they do when accessing the service, as recommended by Indi Youth.

In line with Article 12 of the UNCRC, participation is broadly used to describe the practice, policies and methodologies which enable children to be heard in decision-making.<sup>22</sup> Consequently, children and young people should be able to participate in decision-making within the OSC context. We would emphasise that this is not just relevant to secondary school-aged children but all children.

Within the OSC context this could be the following: choosing which activities they would like to participate in, taking ownership over planning, resourcing and buying equipment, thinking about charity support and

<sup>25</sup> <http://www.indigogrp.com/indiyouth.html>

enterprise opportunities, undertaking risk assessment and recruiting new members of staff. We would refer back to our answer in question 2 that the co-design and co-delivery of services helps to empower users and ensure that services are fit for purpose.

Parents of children with additional support needs in this age group report that there is a very significant gap in services.

## **8. How can we make sure OSC is an affordable option for more families? (e.g. subsidised provision, remove barriers in accessing benefits, help with upfront costs)**

We would like to emphasise that cost remains to be one of the major barriers for families to accessing OSC services. From August 2020 all 3 and 4 year olds and around one quarter of two year olds will be entitled to 1140 hours of free childcare provision. No free out of school care entitlement currently exists for older children outwith formal school hours. Consequently, OSC uptake amongst lone parent families and families from lower socio-economic households is lower than their counterparts in more affluent areas with two parent families.<sup>18</sup>

However, we would note that there are many breakfast clubs, holiday clubs and playschemes which offer families, children and young people free or low cost access to holiday and activity provision. For example, the Café Inc model in Fife operates as a universal offer which provides breakfast/lunch provision to families during the holiday periods.<sup>26</sup> Evidence suggests that children from lone parent families are more likely to attend this type of provision as this is a more affordable option.<sup>18</sup> As a result, we think it is important that there is continued investment and support for these types of provision.

We believe that free or subsidised provision is necessary in order to ensure that barriers are removed for families who struggle to access these services because of financial circumstances. Substantial investment is required in order to ensure that low cost or free services are available. We are pleased that a £3 million after school and holiday childcare fund has been created to support subsidised or low cost childcare for older children. However, we feel this allocation compared to the £2 billion early years expansion programme demonstrates the vastly different status of these two areas.<sup>27</sup> Funding is required to support capacity building within communities to provide accessible and affordable services for all families.

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.fifetoday.co.uk/news/politics/fife-relaunches-cafe-inc-to-tackle-october-holiday-hunger-1-5013467>

<sup>27</sup> <https://news.gov.scot/news/early-years-expansion>

As has been highlighted by our colleagues responding on behalf of the CHANGE project, parents have expressed concern about the “complexity” of the current benefits system.<sup>28</sup> Emphasis needs to be placed on national and local awareness-raising campaigns to support families to understand the childcare benefits they are entitled to. Close attention needs to be paid to engage with families facing interrelated and complex barriers. As a result, multiple methods of engagement will be required to support these families to understand their entitlements. Evidence suggests that every £1 invested in welfare rights services results in £44 worth of benefits being claimed by families.<sup>29</sup> We therefore recommend that greater emphasis is placed on communicating entitlements to parents.

### **9. How can services be more effectively delivered in rural/remote areas to meet the needs of families?**

Access to appropriate venues is a key concern for rural communities delivering OSC provision. The Scottish OSC Network suggests that subsidised provision is important for ensuring that all children can access high quality play-based services. Transport within rural communities can provide a major obstacle for families of children with additional support needs. As a result, subsidised transport is required to collect children from a range of areas in order that they can access provision in a central location. This is particularly important for children with additional support needs. Recruiting and maintaining staff in rural areas will also be a continuing area of focus.

The Flexible Childcare Services Scotland model is proving to be of huge benefit to rural areas.

### **10. How can we ensure that children with disabilities and additional support needs can access OSC services?**

OSC provision needs to be inclusive and tailored to meet the needs of children with additional support needs. We are aware that there are accessibility concerns around children being able to participate and enjoy the benefits of these services. Additionally, there is a shortage of specific locally available provision within the context of specialist schools. The holiday period can provide unique stresses for parents and families.

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<sup>28</sup> OSC Draft Framework- a response from CHANGE

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.parentingacrossscotland.org/media/1222/report3parentingonalow-income.pdf>

We are pleased that research has been commissioned by Shared Care Scotland to investigate the variety and quantity of service available to disabled children.<sup>30</sup> We think it important that the appropriate methods are used to ensure that a wide range of children and their parents and carers can give their views. The research will also investigate good practice in relation to the planning, commissioning and provision of holiday programmes. It is important that consideration of creating these services takes place at community planning level in the first instance.

Initial research in six local authorities revealed that accessing provision can be challenging. The parent involved in the research expressed their frustration surrounding the lack of provision available:

**“This (local support agency) is the only place that I can find in the local authority that has something on during the summer that is suitable for him, and has staff that are trained who can support him and know him. Just because school’s finished at the end of June, everything else should carry on. Because basically their lives are nothing for six or seven weeks. Things fall apart.”<sup>31</sup>**

It is important to note that the appropriate resources need to be in place to equip staff on how to support children with additional support needs. This will require investment and training. However, we would emphasise that relationship-based practice is also key and as a result we would emphasise that services should have key links to schools and other community resources which children already access.

Through managing Enquire and Resolve: ASL Mediation we are aware of barriers that children with additional support needs face. Enquire provides advice and information about additional support for learning to parents, carers, professionals, children, and young people. We help parents and carers understand children’s rights to additional support for learning and how to work in partnership with schools and local authorities to ensure their child gets the support they need.

In the last 12 months the Enquire helpline team advised more than 1,500 families of children with additional support for learning needs (which includes disabled children) and the professionals who support them. Although the Enquire remit focuses on rights in education and support in schools, they also hear about the wider issues affecting the families they speak to. The Enquire advisers hear that families of children with additional support needs are especially vulnerable to experiencing

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<sup>30</sup> <https://www.sharedcarescotland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Holiday-activity-provision-for-disabled-children-and-young-people-flyer-V.2.pdf>

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.sharedcarescotland.org.uk/resources/research/current-research-activity/holiday-activity-provision-2019-national-survey/>

barriers in accessing OSC. This is experienced both through a lack of, and post code lottery in, the provision of specialist OSC for children with additional support needs but also universal provisions and clubs not being accessible to children with additional support needs.

We have heard on multiple occasions of providers of OSC having a lack of awareness of their duties under the Equality Act. For example; families being told their child cannot attend a club due to their disabilities, families being told upfront they will have to pay extra for their child to attend to cover the cost of providing support, or being told their child can only attend if the parent or carer comes along too. We feel that to ensure children with additional support needs, including disabled children, have access to OSC more work is needed to make sure services are aware of their duties to make reasonable adjustments.

Children in Scotland currently manages the Early Learning & Childcare Inclusion Fund<sup>32</sup> on behalf of the Scottish Government, which enables childcare providers to purchase equipment, resources and training to make their services more accessible for young children with additional support needs. We recommend that the Scottish Government considers extending the scope and value of this fund to cover out of school care provision.

Additionally, we advise that in the final framework the Scottish Government recognises the language used by [disabled people's organisations](#). For example, using the terms 'disabled children' and 'disabled people' rather than 'children with disabilities'.

## **11. What flexibility do parents and carers need from OSC services? Can you tell us why this flexibility is important?**

We believe that the provision of high quality OSC to support children should be the central priority of all services. We recognise that these services can help support families to access employment and training opportunities. We understand that varied working patterns can result in families requiring support outwith the traditional 9 to 5. We would like to highlight the benefits of Flexible Childcare Services Scotland, which is discussed in draft framework, for allowing families to book week to week and therefore reducing charges.<sup>33</sup> We believe this could be upscaled to support families in other areas across Scotland. As highlighted within the CHANGE response accompanying business support would be required to ensure services can operate this type of system.

<sup>32</sup> <https://childreninscotland.org.uk/our-work/services/the-early-learning-childcare-elc-inclusion-fund/>

<sup>33</sup> <https://www.fcsc.org.uk/flexible-childcare-your-questions-answered/?cookie-state-change=1575318752422>

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## **12. What is important for parents and carers in terms of location of OSC services? Should they be delivered in schools, community facilities, outdoors?**

Alongside cost, the location of a service has an impact upon uptake.<sup>18</sup> Services can be based in both school and community venues. As has been discussed in question 2, we believe that communities should be involved in the co-design and co-development of services. As a result, locations of services will depend on local contexts and the expressed needs of the local community. For example, the FFF clubs took place in a variety of settings (although predominantly within school settings).

One of the benefits of hosting services within the school environment expressed by families (both from CHANGE and FFF clubs) was that the provision was close to home. This is important for parents of disabled children as transportation can be a key challenge. In the context of OSC services including: registered OSC; supervised activity clubs and holiday clubs are all able to take place within the school context. Other benefits include access to high quality facilities and in some circumstances, in kind contributions (free use of the facilities).<sup>18</sup>

However, it is important to acknowledge that school premises can in some contexts act as a barrier for some families to access a service. For example, some families may prefer to access a breakfast or holiday club in a community venue rather than school because it feels less stigmatising.

Additionally, there can be challenges for OSC services in terms of stability. As a result, it is important that local authority planning ensures flexibility and accounts for the needs of OSC services. In circumstances where a service needs to vacate school premises, adequate support should be provided by the local authority to help services find alternative high-quality spaces.

We would also like to reaffirm the point made in question 5 that provision needs to expand to ensure that families can choose if they would like to access services in school, community and outdoor facilities.

## **13. What ages of children do parents/carers need provision for?**

Predominantly, regulated OSC services cater for primary school aged children. We believe that children of all ages should be able to access these types of services. Involving older young people in the planning and design of these services may encourage greater uptake.

Additionally, we would highlight that these services can provide vital support for older children and young people with additional support needs. We look forward to the results of research undertaken by Shared Care Scotland and hope that this will reveal more information about the ages requiring provision.

There is currently limited information about the ages, experiences and numbers currently accessing unregulated services. We therefore recommend that research is carried out to investigate the current demographic of children and families accessing these types of provision.

#### **14. Do parents/carers need food provision as part of after-school and holiday clubs?**

Yes

There is substantial evidence of the increasing level of food insecurity in Scotland, linked to growing rates of poverty.<sup>34</sup> UK figures show that there were 4.1 million children living in poverty in 2017-2018.<sup>35</sup> This figure is set to rise over the next few years. Access to food is a basic human right and is outlined in Article 27 of the UNCRC. The 2016 UNCRC Concluding Observations reported concerns around ineffective responses to child hunger.<sup>36</sup>

Issues surrounding food become acute during the holiday period for families who rely on free school meal entitlement are highlighted in the Cost of the School Holidays report produced by Child Poverty Action Group in Scotland.<sup>37</sup> Challenges around the holiday period has led to the creation of breakfast and holiday clubs aimed at helping to alleviate some of the pressures families are experiencing. The aim of these clubs is to help families and ensure that children are accessing food to support their physical and emotional wellbeing. Evidence suggests that children going to school hungry and struggling during the holiday period are more likely to have a life expectancy 23 years lower than their more affluent counterparts.<sup>38</sup>

Food is a central focus of the Food, Families, Futures (FFF) programme. FFF was created specifically in response to schools reporting that many families

<sup>34</sup> [https://childrenscotland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Future-Food-Inquiry\\_Final.pdf](https://childrenscotland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Future-Food-Inquiry_Final.pdf)

<sup>35</sup> [https://cpag.org.uk/child-poverty/child-poverty-facts-and-figures#footnoteref1\\_2mhgr8x](https://cpag.org.uk/child-poverty/child-poverty-facts-and-figures#footnoteref1_2mhgr8x)

<sup>36</sup> <https://www.cypcs.org.uk/policy/the-right-to-food>

<sup>37</sup> <https://cpag.org.uk/sites/default/files/CPAG-Scot-Cost-School-Holidays-full%20report.pdf>

<sup>38</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/long-term-monitoring-health-inequalities-headline-indicators-october-2015/>



within their communities experiencing difficulties in accessing high-quality nutritious food during holiday periods.<sup>39</sup> The clubs provide healthy and nutritious meals within the context of a play and learning environment. The model focuses on delivering community responses to food insecurity.

All forms of OSC provision including regulated childcare, activity clubs and childminders can help support children to access food provision. However, predominately, current provision is only able to offer snack rather than a freshly prepared cooked meal.<sup>19</sup> One reason for this is inadequate access to appropriate cooking facilities. In order to provide high quality food provision staff also require additional support and training. As a result, we believe further investment is required to support OSC services to access kitchen facilities and provide staff the appropriate training to prepare meals. We would also like to highlight that as part of the FFF model involves supporting parents to develop skills in preparing and cooking an affordable and nutritious meal. We believe aspects of this can be applied in the context of OSC provision.

There are many excellent examples of projects and partnership work to address food insecurity. We would like to highlight the Growing, Cooking and Nutrition group as discussed in the CHANGE consultation response.

## **15. What qualifications, skills and experience should the OSC workforce have? What is most important and why?**

It has been suggested that the benefits that can be reaped from OSC provision very much depend on the quality of provision available. There are many different factors which can impact quality. Staff training is one factor which influences the quality of provision.<sup>40</sup> Children in Scotland would like to highlight that families involved in the CHANGE project indicated that they wanted staff working in registered childcare to have a formal qualification.<sup>28</sup> Findings from a survey undertaken by the Scottish Out of School Care Network reveal that 13% of practitioners working in OSC do not have any form of qualifications.<sup>41</sup> Of those who have formal qualifications these include Playwork SVQ3 and HNC Early Learning and Childcare.

In the context of early learning and childcare, evidence suggests that there is a “correlation between workforce qualification, level, content and attention to social and educational content and effective pedagogical approaches.”<sup>13</sup> Although it is difficult to provide direct comparisons between sectors (particularly due to the diversity of provision) we think that

<sup>39</sup> [https://childreninscotland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Future-Food-Inquiry\\_Final.pdf](https://childreninscotland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Future-Food-Inquiry_Final.pdf)

<sup>40</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/independent-review-scottish-early-learning-childcare-elc-workforce-out-school/pages/5/>

<sup>41</sup> [https://soscn.org/downloads/research/OSC\\_Workforce\\_Survey\\_Results\\_2018.pdf](https://soscn.org/downloads/research/OSC_Workforce_Survey_Results_2018.pdf)

the same principles apply. However, we would highlight that pay should increase in line with any qualification stipulations.

However, we are aware that the format and length of training undertaken considerably varies dependent upon the type of provision. We also acknowledge that many other qualifications are relevant to the OSC sector and should be recognised. For example qualifications relating to “arts, sports, physical activities, youth work, science, forest rangers, play therapists, crafts people”,<sup>17</sup> food preparation and cooking.

We believe all staff should have a thorough knowledge and understanding of child development and child protection in these settings. The significance of forming relationships with children and their families should be a core component of staff training. As has been highlighted in responses to earlier questions one of the key supports children want from services is a positive relationship with a trusted adult.

One of the barriers identified for children with additional support needs in accessing out of school services is linked to lack of staff training and low levels of confidence in supporting children with additional support needs. As a result, resource should be in place to ensure all staff feel equipped to support and include all young people in their services. Training and resources across the sector should be much better shared in line with many policy frameworks and guidance.

Children and young people have highlighted concerns around wellbeing and mental health support. As a result, it is important that staff working within this sector receive ongoing training and development. We are aware that these should already be met as GIRFEC should be a focal point of regulated services. We are also aware of some services that have supported their staff to undertake mental health first aid training.

Additionally, staff should have a thorough awareness and understanding of the lifelong consequences of childhood adversity.<sup>42</sup> Staff working within the sector can help mitigate some of the impacts of the effects that childhood adversity may have. They can do this by recognising and responding in a “psychologically informed manner”.<sup>42</sup> Children at risk of the negative effects of adversity benefit from building nurturing, secure a trusting relationships with adults. We would like to highlight training produced by NHS Education Scotland to ensure that trauma informed practice underpins delivery.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> <http://www.healthscotland.scot/media/1517/tackling-the-attainment-gap-by-preventing-and-responding-to-adverse-childhood-experiences.pdf>

<sup>43</sup> <https://www.nes.scot.nhs.uk/education-and-training/by-discipline/psychology/multi-professional-psychology/national-trauma-training-framework.aspx>

**16. Thinking about the full range of provision - regulated OSC, childminders, holiday programmes and other activities - should qualification requirements for staff working across these provisions be the same or different? Why?**

It is important to note that comparing qualifications within the OSC sector is challenging because of the diversity of provision available.<sup>40</sup> It is difficult to benchmark qualifications against other sectors including education, youth and early learning and childcare because of the variation in provision. We believe staff working in the contexts of school care and childminding should have the same qualification requirements. Where possible this would also apply to holiday and activity clubs but we recognise within these contexts other qualifications are also applicable. However, as has been mentioned in the previous response we believe all groups should have knowledge and awareness of: child development, child protection, trauma and childhood adversity, how to support children with additional support needs, parental engagement and play based approaches.

**17. How can we promote working in the OSC sector as a more attractive career choice?**

We would like to highlight that the expansion of early learning and childcare has, in some cases, led to the loss of staff from the OSC sector.<sup>17</sup> Staff are attracted to work in early learning and childcare because they are more likely to gain full time employment, paid higher wages and have access to more opportunities for career progression. Figures from a survey undertaken by the Scottish OSC Network in 2018 reveal that 92% of workers worked part time with only 8% working full time.<sup>41</sup>

Additionally, levels of pay prove to be a key challenge for attracting and retaining staff into the sector. The average pay scale for a practitioner was £16,853 (pro rata, 35-hour week). We believe that pay needs to align with any level of qualification.

Opportunities to obtain qualifications, for flexible working and career development within the sector will be important factors which could help promote out of school care as a career choice. Alongside this, consideration should be given to how the Scottish Government and public bodies communicate and share positive messaging about out of school care, to emphasise the potential benefits it can have for children and families.

## 18. How can we increase diversity across the OSC workforce?

We would like to concur with the CHANGE response that the current OSC workforce is currently female dominated. An analysis of the OSC workforce by SOSCN<sup>44</sup> from 2018 shows that 91% of lead practitioners, practitioners and support workers identified as female and just 9% identified as male. It is important that specific targeted work is undertaken to raise awareness of the benefits of men pursuing careers in this sector.

However, we recognise that culture change takes time and as a result it will also be important to undertake information awareness campaigns to the wider public about men working in caring sectors including the childcare sector. We would also encourage research to explore the current make-up of the OSC workforce in relation to other protected characteristics. Children will benefit most from building relationships with a diverse range of role models. As a result, it is important to explore the diversity of the current workforce and implement solutions to increase diversity.

In order to do this we recommend that the Scottish Government reaches out to community groups representing those with protected characteristics to explore how less well represented populations can be supported to enter the out of school care workforce.

### For Further Information Please Contact:

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<sup>44</sup> Scottish Social Services Council, 2018. *Scottish Social Service Sector: Report on 2018 Workforce Data*. Available at: <https://data.sssc.uk.com/images/WDR/WDR2018.pdf>