



Children in Scotland
every child - every childhood

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For immediate release

National agencies appeal to Ministers for focus on seamless care for children

With the long school holidays on the horizon, the need for well-structured, seamless childcare will be on the minds of parents and carers who may be faced with a six-week shortfall in care provision for their children. Children in Scotland and the Scottish Out of School Care Network (SOSCN) are, therefore, calling for a meeting with Ministers to raise a number of issues and concerns arising from the SOSCN 2009 Annual Conference – *Working Together: the importance of positive relationships between schools & out of school care*.

The conference explored the relationship between school and out of school care, and how best to move forward development of a more integrated and seamless approach to provision of these services in Scotland. The event also contributed to Children in Scotland's Working It Out and Working For Inclusion programmes, which explore European workforce models, and the potential for introducing a professional Scottish pedagogue, who would be qualified to work in a range of educational settings.

“The wider workforce could benefit from a simplified qualifications and professional development framework, which is something we would encourage,” Children in Scotland’s Chief Executive, Bronwen Cohen said. “Out of school services will become more, not less, important over the coming decades, and the potential for this section of the workforce to contribute to key strategies, including Curriculum for Excellence, the Early Years Framework, Getting it Right for Every Child and Additional Support for Learning legislation, must not be overlooked.”

Although nearly half of all out of school care services are located in schools, a recent SOSCN survey found that these are often staffed by an undervalued and under-qualified workforce, with less than 40% of out of school workers having the security of a pension, compared with teachers and classrooms assistants. The services provided also suffer from lack of adequate storage space for equipment and materials, and have been overlooked in the planning of new-build PPP schools.

The demand for full-day care beyond school hours is growing in Scotland, with more children spending time in out of school care. Both children, and their families, now regard it as part of the school day, and staff are aware of the importance of the services they offer, which include essential time for play, leisure and relaxation. Research shows that this sense of continuity is important for children’s wellbeing. But the country is lagging behind other European nations in creating a strategic approach to the development of services, where, in many cases, services are integrated into the school through a ‘whole day’ approach and out of school workers also contribute during the school day.

Irene Audain, Chief Executive of SOSCN commented: “The majority of school age childcare services in Scotland are provided by a mix of the voluntary and private sectors. Nearly half are located in schools, and all provide valuable care, play and informal learning for children, which complements the curriculum. They should, therefore, be treated as equal and useful partners by schools and other agencies supporting children and families.”

The conference also considered the issue of separate registration (and non-registration) of the different groups working in schools and out of school services, in relation to the current General Teaching Council for Scotland consultation, which provides an opportunity to re-assess the Council’s approach to professional registration for those working in schools, and in the wider school-based workforce.

Delegates also highlighted the need to examine current government responsibility for early years provision: while Westminster still controls Child and Family Tax credits and Childcare vouchers, provision of services is devolved, which potentially impedes the restructuring of service provision.

Notes for Editors –

Children in Scotland is the national ‘umbrella’ agency for the whole of the children’s sector, reaching over 250,000 individuals through our extensive membership of more than 450 statutory agencies, voluntary sector organisations, professional associations and community groups.

Our policy team, in close cooperation with our members, works on a very broad range of proposed laws, public policies and regulations to improve the wellbeing and life chances of all children and young people. For further information visit www.childreninscotland.org.uk

Working it out is a 12-month programme (to November 2009) inviting the children's sector workforce, employers, planners, universities, colleges and other stakeholders to join Children in Scotland in debate about future workforce development. The programme is funded by the Scottish Government. For further information visit: www.childreninscotland.org.uk/workforce

Working for Inclusion is a cross-European programme, from February 2009 to January 2011, to examine how improving the qualifications and skills of those working with our youngest children can help reduce poverty and improve social inclusion. It is funded by the European Commission and supported by the Scottish Government. For further information visit: www.childreninscotland.org.uk/wfi

The Scottish Out of School Care Network (SOSCN) is the national umbrella charitable body representing the interests of the 1000+ school age childcare services in Scotland. SOSCN recently conducted a survey of the school age childcare workforce and preliminary results can be requested with the full survey due to be published at the end of the summer.

www.soscn.org

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