

Scottish Out of School Care Network (SOSCN)

"supporting play, care and learning"



SOSCN Seminar – Future Changes

Tuesday 26th January

Albany Centre, Glasgow

Future Changes focused on the changes, real and potential facing the sector in the next couple of years; these include the introduction of new scrutiny bodies to replace the Care Commission from April 2011, and the UK elections in 2010.

SOSCN Chief Executive, Irene Audain, provided a general overview of all the issues currently affecting out of school care services in Scotland.

Guest speakers from the Care Commission and the Scottish Government's Scrutiny Bodies Project Team presented an overview of the legislation and organisation changes. Delegates participated in facilitated discussion groups looking at the proposed structures and changes relating to the scrutiny of out of school care services.

Choices- One Parent Families Scotland West's Marion Davis gave an overview of the UK and Scottish governments' welfare reform policies and knock-on effect to childcare provision in Scotland. Facilitated discussion groups allowed delegates to feed into our manifesto and highlight the issues that matter to out of school care in Scotland.

Speakers:

Irene Audain, Chief Executive, Scottish Out of School Care Network (SOSCN)

Richard Lyall, Scrutiny Bodies Project Team, Scottish Government

Care Commission, Bryan Livingstone

Marion Davis, Manager, Choices – One Parent Families Scotland West

Copies of the presentations are available from www.soscn.org/policy.html

Please note the following feedback is compiled from delegates' own personal comments and opinions from the seminar.



Morning discussion relating to changes to scrutiny legislation and regulatory body

1. What do you think are the positive aspects of the current Regulatory system and why?
2. What would you like to see retained and what would you like to see changed?
3. Any concerns or fears...?

1. Positive aspects of current system

- Online accessibility
 - Online completion of forms
 - Availability of inspection reports online
 - Ability to pay online

For those groups with Internet access this online accessibility was seen to be of value and fairly easy to use. However for those services with limited or no direct Internet access this was seen to be a burden and it was felt inappropriate to be completing forms online in public spaces such as libraries.

- The quality and standards have been raised in out of school care services.
- Parents are now aware of the National Care Standards- their knowledge and expectations of childcare has been increased.
- Some providers appreciated local Care Commission Officers as they were able to provide a "personal touch".
- Everyone is inspected according to the same criteria (National Care Standards). [Although this also led to discussions of inconsistency, such as Care Commission Officers interpreting the Standards subjectively, leading to their own personal 'bug bears'- this will be covered in discussion of question 2.)
- Same Care Commission Officer inspecting all operational sites for one out of school care provider- good for consistency.
- Grading system
 - Good for services as it allows them to see in which areas they need to make improvements.
 - Good for parents and carers as it is easy to understand grading system.



2. Retention and change

Retain	Change
All the positive aspects from question one.	Paper copies of forms should be available and accepted as well as online versions.
Self-evaluation and grading system.	Relationship between Care Commission and services should be a partnership with joint aims.
Need to retain formal rights of appeal and informal dialogue	Lack of specialist knowledge – Care Commission officers and other experts* provide contradicting advice and information. Officers should have in-depth knowledge of the sector they are inspecting.
	Care Commission officers need better communication skills.
	In consistency in way children are treated in school and outside- different regulations for children when in school and out of school care- same children, often same premises. Need consistency.
	Inconsistency in the way CCO's interpret the standards- seen nationally and locally. Need consistency.
	Challenging recommendations needs to be a transparent and clear process- services should feel confident that they will be listened to.
	National Care Standards are written from a service user's point of view- need for more detailed guidance for service providers.
	CCO's need a greater play perspective and not just focus on safety- should be a greater 'marrying' between qualifications and standards.
	More attention should be paid to the work on the floor.
	Unannounced visits should be entirely thus.
	More of a 'marrying'

*e.g. Environmental Health Officers, Health Practitioners etc.

Please note that for the purposes of the discussion the use of 'Care Commission Officers' refers to the future regulatory body's inspectors as well.

3. Concerns or fears

- Need to take into account that services use different spaces at different times.
- The regulatory body needs to actively stop myths about what they say can and cannot be done.



- Fear of the unknown- need clarification and good information during the transition and implementation of the new regulatory legislation and body. A need for clear and direct communication.
- Staff don't want to 'start again' - don't want change just for the sake of it.
- Who will handle complaints against inspections/ services?
- Will there be increased costs for services?
- Is there the possibility of too few inspections and what might be the knock-on effect on quality?
- Don't want unrealistic criteria and targets need to take into account practical implications of premises, voluntary management committees etc.

MANIFESTO FOR OSC

The afternoon discussion groups focused on the creation of a Manifesto for Out of School Care which took our 2007 Manifesto as the basis for discussion. Many delegates said that the issues were very similar between now and then. However, the following issues were highlighted for consideration:

- Permanent ring-fencing of money for OSC- to pay staff and keep services going.
- Greater access to European Funding.
- Sustainability (fees/wages).
- Budget for qualifications (funding to meet SSSC qualifications).
- Staff turnover.
- 2nd job tax- positions are short hours but highly taxed.
- Disclosure issues.
- Put the focus back on the child and on valuing children in society.
- Emphasise the non-economic benefits of OSC i.e. social opportunities, especially in rural areas.

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- Informal learning through social interaction.
- Increase the profile and promote the value of OSC to a wider audience.
- No national government policy for OSC (want to see OSC explicitly mentioned in policies.)
- A supportive OSC policy to be developed and implemented within each local authority.
- Partnership working.
- Changing formal education.
- Curriculum for excellence- opportunity and need.