

# Scottish Out of School Care Network

## Policy Newsletter, August 2007



*"Supporting play, care and learning"*

**Policy News**

### **Response to Care Commission Draft Policy on Peripatetic Managers in Daycare of Children Services**

SOSCN recently responded to the above consultation from the Care Commission; thank you for all contributions regards the policy. In the response Irene Audain, SOSCN Chief Executive said:

"While we support the idea of care commission officers working within a set of prescribed and suggested ratios and totals as outlined in the proposed policy, we would urge that these figures are not set in stone and that each provider operating over several sites could have the opportunity to negotiate for more flexible arrangements without harm to the quality of services on offer. This should also, conversely, give care commission officers the opportunities to vary and impose tighter requirements; for example, if one site caters mainly for children with additional support needs, to have additional more experienced and qualified staff, or another site caters mainly for much older children and so requires less specialist staff.

To sum up we believe two factors should be taken into consideration in terms of multi site provision, first the quality and quantity of deputy, practitioner and support staff, and the levels of responsibility they hold for day to day running of that satellite; second, offering large scale services some flexibility around the parameters of the suggested figures, especially to allow some time for transitional arrangements in terms of training and access to manager level qualifications."

The full response can be found at [www.soscn.org](http://www.soscn.org)

### **New Capital Grant for Early Years, Childcare and Play**

At the end of July, the Scottish Executive announced in a letter to Local Authority Directors of Education and Finance, Chief Executives, Pre-5 and Childcare contacts, as well as Umbrella Bodies, a new £8m capital grant for Early Years, Childcare and Play (2007-2008). Similar to childcare strategy funding, each local authority has been allocated money which they must use to "Improve quality and accessibility of early years, childcare and play facilities and provide scope for extended and integrated service delivery."

The letter states:

"Local authorities will be expected to provide opportunities for voluntary sector providers and community organisations in particular to submit proposals as they can often face difficulties in accessing capital funding. Ministers have set a target of 20% of each local authority's spending to be used in the voluntary and community sector, whilst recognising that there will be variations across the country to reflect the particular contribution that such groups make to services in each area.

The situation for the private sector is more complex, as they can often access other sources of capital. Ministers have indicated that the fund should be open to private sector providers, but only where the projects in question have a clear and demonstrable wider community benefit."

5 funding priorities have also been identified:

1. Refurbishing or upgrading Early Years facilities to create a better environment for staff and children, and to develop closer links with parents.
2. Creating, extending or refurbishing early years facilities to deliver extended or more integrated services.
3. Improving facilities for out of school care.
4. Creating, refurbishing or upgrading play spaces, equipment and facilities for children, both within early years centres and in the wider community.
5. Adaptations and equipment to improve access to play, early years services and out of school care for children with additional support needs.

Local authorities must submit applications to the Scottish Executive by the end of September 2007.

Although we are pleased to see this additional money being made available we are concerned that most of it will remain within the education department of local authorities and not be opened up to childcare providers. Has this happened within your local authority? Please let us know your experience of accessing this grant.

### **Scottish Household Survey 2005/2006**

The Scottish Household Survey 2005/2006 was published at the beginning of this month, August 2007. (<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/193421/0052120.pdf>) The Scottish Household Survey was started in 1999 and is designed to gather characteristic information on a variety of topics from a sample of households across Scotland. One of the topics is childcare.

According to results, it was found that 77% of parents use out of school care to enable them, or their partner, to work; 17% use it for the child's development; 8% use it to give them, or their partner, more time to do other things, and 7 % said that it allowed them to study, or study more.

63% of parents strongly agreed with the statement that they were satisfied with the quality of the out of school care they use, and 31% said that they tended to agree with this statement.

### **UK Government**

#### **Welfare Reform, Lone Parents and School-Aged Childcare**

On the 18th July, Peter Hain announced in Westminster a proposed change to the benefits given to lone parents. Mr Hain said that from 2010, lone parents would be made to seek employment when their youngest child reached age 7, he also added that: "there would be sufficient pre- and after-school facilities to justify the tougher regime" (Guardian, July 19<sup>th</sup>).

While this may be the case in England, it is doubtful that this will be true for Scotland. Unlike England where local authorities have a statutory right to ensure childcare provision, Scottish local authorities do not have the same responsibility; and as we are well aware, funding from the Executive for childcare is often top sliced to provide other services. Too many out of school

care services are struggling, and without dedicated ring-fenced funding further services will probably close.

This proposed welfare reform affects all of the UK but consideration only seems to have been given to England regards adequate provision of childcare. SOSCN finds this unacceptable and is working with One Parent Families Scotland to highlight this issue in Westminster.

## SOSCN Events

### Out of School Care Seminar

#### **“Setting the Agenda- The Way forward for Out of School Care”**

**Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> October 2007**

Millennium Hotel, George Square, Glasgow

The latest SOSCN Out of School Care Seminar aims to create a working strategic plan for out of school care in Scotland over the next three years. SOSCN wants to develop a strategic plan that can be used by everyone to support the sector and campaign for greater recognition at national and local levels.

The format of the day will include a number of presentations from SOSCN as well as an Issue in Focus: "Lone Parents, Welfare Reform and School Age Children", a presentation by Marion Davis of Choices- One Parent Families West of Scotland; delegates will also have the opportunity to participate in round-table discussions.

This is your opportunity to discuss the priorities for out of school care and contribute towards a plan taking the issues forward in a strategic way.

For further information and a booking form, go to: [www.soscn.org/events.html](http://www.soscn.org/events.html) or email [policy@soscn.org](mailto:policy@soscn.org) requesting further details.

### **DATE FOR THE DIARY - FRIDAY 7<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 2007 –DATE FOR THE DIARY**

The Scottish Out of School Care Network 2007 Conference provides a continental European perspective on out of school care featuring a number of top international speakers from mainland Europe.

This is a rare opportunity to share ideas, perspectives and good practice with foreign colleagues, be sure to book your place- details to follow in the next few weeks.

**SOSCN Conference 2007, Friday 7<sup>th</sup> December, Glasgow Radisson Hotel**