

# Scottish Out of School Care Network

## Policy Newsletter, January 2008



*"Supporting play, care and learning"*

### **Policy News**

#### **Parliamentary Questions**

After a meeting between Irene Audain and Rhona Brankin, Shadow Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning, the following questions were lodged in the parliament on behalf of the Scottish Out of School Care Network on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2007. Adam Ingram responded to the questions on 11<sup>th</sup> December.

**Q To ask the Scottish Executive how it will support out-of-school care and ensure that children can access quality school age childcare.**

A: The Childcare Strategy aims to ensure that there is sufficient child care available for children in all areas of Scotland. This strategy remains in place and will continue to support child care, including out-of-school care. In addition, the Early Years Strategy, to be developed jointly with local government partners and other interests, will cover pre-birth to age eight years and the majority of out-of-school services will therefore fall within its scope.

**Q: To ask the Scottish Executive how it proposes to monitor progress towards the acquisition of professional qualifications for the early years and childcare workforce.**

A: Qualification levels of the early years and child care workforce are included as part of our annual pre-school and child care census. Statistics are published on the Scottish Government website.

**Q: To ask the Scottish Executive how it will monitor progress on the Workforce Development Fund for early years and childcare services.**

A: This funding will be absorbed into the main local government settlement for 2008-09 and beyond. We will not be monitoring separately, instead we will receive a single annual report from local government as agreed within the concordat.

**Q: To ask the Scottish Executive whether there is a legal requirement for childcare workforce development.**

A: The Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001 (the act) established the Care Commission to register and inspect all services regulated under the act, including day care of children services. When registering and inspecting services it will take account of national care standards. These include ensuring services have in place an effective system for identifying and monitoring staff development needs.

The act also established the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) as the regulatory body of the social service workforce. In order to register, workers must have, or be working towards specified qualifications for their role.

**Q: To ask the Scottish Executive what funding exists for childcare workforce development in its budget.**

A: In financial year 2007-08 the Scottish Government made available £6 million for early years and child care workforce development. From April 2008, this funding will be absorbed into the local government finance settlement to give local authorities more flexibility to meet both local needs and the national outcomes in the concordat.

**Q: To ask the Scottish Executive how much was spent on out-of-school childcare in the last budget period.**

A: The information requested is not held centrally. For the period 2007-08, a Grant Aided Expenditure (GAE) assessment of £44.556 million was made to support the child care strategy, which includes out-of-school care and other forms of child care. Child care strategy GAE is not ring-fenced and therefore local authorities have discretion to vary expenditure to reflect local needs. Expenditure Information received from the local authorities does not include separate data on child care, including out of school child care.

**Q: To ask the Scottish Executive what funding it plans to allocate to out-of-school childcare in each year to 2011.**

A: For 2007-08, a Grant Aided Expenditure assessment of £44.556 million for the Childcare Strategy, including out-of-school child care was allocated to local authorities.

We will continue to work in partnership with local government partners to drive forward our child care priorities. For future years, this funding will be included within the overall local government finance settlement. It will be the responsibility of each local authority, in conjunction with their Community Planning Partners, to allocate the funding on the basis of their local needs and priorities – taking into account their statutory obligations and the jointly agreed set of national and local priorities, including the Scottish Government's key strategic objectives and manifesto commitments. Further details on these new arrangements can be found in the Scottish Budget Report and related Concordat with local government. Copies of both documents are available in the Scottish Parliament Information

## **SOSCN Media Coverage**

Extract from letter sent from SOSCN CEO, Irene Audain, published in The Herald (22/12/2008) highlighting the continued need for out of school care, especially for older children, and concerns for the stability of the sector due to the lack of ring-fenced funding for childcare services.

"...out-of-school care is not a statutory duty for local authorities, and while we campaign to get more provision for older children and young people, services also have to rely on a cocktail of charitable and short-term funding packages. It is almost cruel: for six months, say, a young person can get to a club and learn new skills such as canoeing, climbing, getting on with others, team work etc, yet the funding ends and they have nothing to do.

Of course, this is especially hard on children from deprived communities, who could not afford to pursue such interests on their own. If it were not for the dedication and tenacity of the parent volunteer committee members I doubt very much that half of the 1000 out-of-school care services would still exist, with very few catering yet for that vulnerable early teenage age group. Yet,

parents do want services and clubs for them. Sadly, there are few sources of funding to set up such badly needed provision.

Our government is planning to devolve all funding relating to childcare to local government. We are asked to trust that local government will invest in services for children and young people without ring-fencing the funding, and without being asked to be directly accountable for the funds. Is this a risky strategy or not? Time will tell.

It is children and young people, their parents and their communities who will suffer if councils fail to honour funding commitments..."

## **Current Consultations**

**OSCR- "Meeting the Charity Test Guidance Consultation"** ([www.oscr.org.uk](http://www.oscr.org.uk))  
**Opened: 11/01/2008** **Closes: 7/04/2008**

Register with OSCR by emailing [consultations@oscr.org.uk](mailto:consultations@oscr.org.uk) before 28/01/2008 to participate in focus group sessions to be organised in February 2008.

Purpose: "There has, been considerable development and evolution in the application of the charity test, so it is appropriate to revisit the Meeting the Charity Test Guidance, and update it to reflect practice and developments since the initial guidance was published. We are therefore seeking views on the attached draft guidance revised in this light." (OSCR, January 2008)

**Scottish Government- "Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007. Consultation on Secondary Legislation."** ([www.scotland.gov.uk/Consultations/Current](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Consultations/Current))  
**Opened: 01/11/2007** **Closes: 12/02/2008**

"This consultation document invites comments on policy proposals for secondary legislation required to implement the vetting and barring functions introduced through the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007.

This is a substantial consultation through which the Scottish Government is seeking views on how best to use a range of powers available under the Act. The options set out seek to strike the right balance between proportionate protection of vulnerable groups and not unduly comprising the privacy rights of individuals, including their ability to work in their chosen career." (Scottish Government, November 2007)

**Scottish Government- "Choosing the Right Ingredients. The Future for Food in Scotland. DiscussionPaper."** ([www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Business-Industry/Food-Industry/Discussion](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Business-Industry/Food-Industry/Discussion))  
**Opened: 15/01/2008** **Closes: 25/04/2008**

"The Scottish Government has a vision for food in Scotland. We want to see everyone healthier, wealthier and smarter with production making communities stronger and consumption respecting the local and global environment. This is an opportunity for us to discuss with you how we might get there" (Scottish Government, January 2008)

## SOSCN News

### Out of School Care Development Officers Group

SOSCN recently set up a forum for OSC Development Officers; the initial meeting in November 2007 was well attended and we look to build upon this initial success with successive meetings.

### Out of School Care Strategic Plan

After an unexpected delay, this document (as first discussed in our October 2007 seminar) will be ready for further discussion in February 2008.

### SOSCN Conference, December 2007

#### **European Perspectives in Out of School Care - Right for Scotland?**

This was a well-attended event and provided delegates with an insight into different European models of provision and philosophies as well as practical ideas as to how these could be implemented in Scotland. Speakers included Adam Ingram MSP, Professor Sven Morch [University of Copenhagen], Kathleen Marshall [Scottish Commissioner for Children and Young People] and the Nature Kindergarten.

*"Wonderful! I'm away to build a den (not done it for years)"*

*"Informative given my role in both day time education services and holiday services"*

*"The morning sessions were informative, humorous and gave practical advice. The speakers were motivational"*

*"This is the first SOSCN conference I have attended and I thoroughly enjoyed it. I would definitely book another"*

A programme of future SOSCN events and seminars in 2008 will be available in February.

## Minimum Wage & Holiday Entitlement Reminder

Both the minimum wage and holiday entitlement increased in October 2007; they are now as follow:

### Minimum Wage:

Main rate (22 years old and over)	£5.52 per hour
Development rate (18 – 21 years old)	£4.60 per hour
Development rate (16 & 17 years old)	£3.40 per hour

### Holiday Entitlement:

24 paid days (4.8 weeks), including public holidays, for full time staff working 5 days per week.

Part-time employee entitlement is pro-rata; to calculate entitlement go to [www.businesslink.gov.uk](http://www.businesslink.gov.uk) and use the online calculator.