

SERVICE UPDATE

<u>Name of Function:</u>	Children and Family Services
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<u>Title of Update:</u>	Service Update – School Age Childcare
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Introduction

The purpose of this Service Update is to provide Elected Members with an update on School Age Childcare (also referred to as Out of School Care), following a similar update provided in June 2022, and to inform Elected Members about a recent successful bid to Scottish Government Inspiring School Age Childcare Spaces Programme.

Background

School Age Childcare services play a vital role within our communities, offering a variety of options which families can rely on to support their childcare needs before and after school, and during the holidays. It is not currently a statutory service, like Early Learning and Childcare, however it is a crucial service for many families who rely on it to enable them to work or study and it contributes positively to the economic development of the city as well as helping improve outcomes for children and young people. Following the implementation of Early Learning and Childcare expansion, we have seen a natural increase in demand for School Age Childcare, as parents and carers look to secure continuity of childcare when their children start Primary School.

Registered School Age Childcare provisions are regulated by the Care Inspectorate and are subject to ongoing inspection. Inspections, in Aberdeen, continue to be positive.

School Age Childcare in Aberdeen

We have a mixed model of School Age Childcare provision in Aberdeen. There are currently 43 settings, delivering nearly 1700 registered places on a daily basis across the city (up 200 from June 2022). In addition, there are 923 registered breakfast club places across the city, as well as a number of unregistered services offering free or low cost breakfast. Aberdeen City Council (ACC) run approximately 1/5th of all registered services. The others are run by

Community Link Childcare (CLICC), a social enterprise company, and a mix of other private and independent childcare providers.

A map has been created to provide a visual overview of where School Age Childcare is located across the city:

https://www.google.com/maps/d/edit?mid=15uXp_FoaRzx4vUVxVLILLH0yV-JckLnp&usp=sharing

Aberdeen City Council Provision

We have built a very successful business model with competitive but standardised fees across the city, including 50% discount for families in receipt of certain benefits. This means that our services are accessible and affordable for all. We are especially proud we can offer a School Age Childcare service for children with Additional Support Needs (ASN) which was developed in response to a recent review of supply and demand.

National Update - Expansion of School Age Childcare

As part of the Programme for Government, the Scottish Government confirmed a commitment to School Age Childcare. This commitment will see some wrap around childcare services (before and after school clubs) and holiday provision made free for some families as part of the Tackling Child Poverty agenda and more affordable for others.

The 'Best Start, Bright Futures', Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan 2022-26, identifies six priority groups:

- Families with a baby under one;
- Families with three or more children;
- Lone parent families;
- Families with a young mother (under 25);
- Minority ethnic families; and
- Families with a disabled adult or child.

Current actions include:

1. The establishment of a School Age Childcare People Panel;
2. The co-creation of a Children's Charter for School Age Childcare;
3. And we await the publication of the national delivery framework which will outline the Scottish Government's school age childcare commitments and the action areas for the next 3 years.

<https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/research-and-analysis/2023/06/national-childrens-charter-school-age-childcare-scotland/documents/national-childrens-charter-school-age-childcare-scotland/national-childrens-charter-school-age-childcare-scotland/govscot%3Adocument/national-childrens-charter-school-age-childcare-scotland.pdf>

Inspiring School Age Childcare Spaces Programme

Aberdeen City Council submitted four project funding proposals to Scottish Government / Scottish Futures Fund in May 2023, in relation to the Inspiring School Age Childcare Spaces (ISACS) Programme. We are delighted to confirm the projects listed below were considered to have met all the qualifying criteria at the time the assessment workshop took place and have been identified by Ministers to be included as part of ISACS Programme.

Project Name:	Maximum award approved:
Cornhill School Community Wing	£100,000
Orchard Brae School	£56,420
Kirkhill Primary School	£59,431
Muirfield Primary School	£93,610

Cornhill School Community Wing

We have secured funding to provide a secure outdoor area with direct access from the club room to outside, which will offer children the ability to have free flow play and make their own choice of being inside or outside. Suitable outdoor lightening will also be installed to allow access outdoors all year round. Outdoor storage will enable Loose Parts to be stored within the area with easy access for the children.

The improvements will also be of benefit to the wider Cornhill Community who access the Community Wing of Cornhill School.

This project will provide:

- Access from room to outdoors;
- Suitable permanent fencing;
- Suitable outdoor surface; and
- Outdoor storage.

Orchard Brae School

We have secured funding to create and develop the space within the GP room in the school that is welcoming, cosy and offers the ability to be adapted to meet the differing needs of the children attending. This will include the purchase of suitable furnishings such as a sofa, beanbags, tables, chairs & sensory resources.

Funding will also be used to develop a permanent outdoor area which will be fully secure with suitable fencing and offer the opportunity for children to have free flow play opportunities from the room to outside and back as they choose. Suitable lighting will ensure that the outdoor area can be accessed year round. A suitable storage cupboard will also be added.

The school will also benefit by having access to the area during the school day as a breakout area for children who may need a quiet time away from class and the provision of a cosy adaptable space will also meet their needs.

Kirkhill Primary School

Funding has been secured to further develop both inside and outside areas, which will allow the development of a holiday club provision in the area. There is currently no holiday club provision in the local area and we are seeking to meet this gap in provision, by making the necessary improvements in order to offer longer hours of registered care.

The project will provide:

- Access to outdoor area from room;
- Fence at both ends with gate at carpark end;
- Removal of current black fence;
- Resurface of tarmac area;
- Suitable worktop for kitchen area and cooker; and
- Lockable doors on cupboards for secure storage.

Muirfield Primary School

Finally, we have secured funding to facilitate year-round outdoor play and activities at Muirfield After School Club by improving the outdoor area.

The project will provide:

- Outdoor flood lighting
- Outdoor storage.

This project is being delivered in partnership with Community Link Childcare (CLICC) who operate the After School Club at Muirfield.

Next Steps

We continue to consult with children and young people, parents and carers and School Age Childcare providers to help inform our offer. The next consultation is planned for Autumn 2023;

We will deliver the projects funded as part of the ISACS programme by April 2024; and

We plan to refresh and update Aberdeen City Council's Out of School Care Policy (and rename School Age Childcare) in line with National Policy once we are clearer about direction of travel and timeline for delivering the National School Age Childcare commitment. A report will be taken to the Education and Children's Services Committee for consideration following publication of firm national plans.