

The National Children's Charter for School Age Childcare in Scotland



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The National Children's Charter for School Age Childcare

In November and December 2022, A Place in Childhood (APiC) and Scottish Government visited five schools and one young carers group in Dingwall, Conon Bridge, Dundee, Alloa, Mid Yell, and Aberdeen. The goal was to co-create local children's charters for school age childcare in each area. We picked these places to represent the different types of areas and experiences across Scotland – from big cities to remote rural communities. In total, 125 children between the ages of 4 and 12 took part, from a range of family backgrounds.

To create local charters, each group talked about how to create the best Out of School Club possible for their area. This frame gave us all a sense of what school age childcare needs to look like in each community, with children taking part in a range of activities to look at the 'Where', 'Who', 'How', 'Why' and 'What' of the club. APiC then used everything the children had said to draw up a draft charter for each place, and sent these as posters back to the groups so the children taking part could check them over and make sure nothing was missed or misunderstood. Some groups also shared their charters with other classes in their schools to make them even better!

The next step was to go from a local charter for each place, to a National Charter to guide school age childcare across all of Scotland. To do this, APiC invited a team of four or five representatives from each of the six groups to a National Children's Charter Workshop in January 2023. Children from Alloa, Dundee and Aberdeen met together at the Dundee Science Centre, while Ben Wyvis school and the young carers team in Dingwall took part remotely. In the workshop everyone discussed and improved a draft National Charter that drew together everything that was the same in their local charters. They added more thoughts and ideas, to make it even better and able to meet the needs of all children across the country. They also thought about guiding principles for childcare. Unfortunately, bad weather meant that the school in Mid Yell was closed, and so APiC organised another workshop for Team Yell to check over everyone's work and add the finishing touches.

This is the final version of our National Charter, which also includes lots of pictures of the work we made along the way.

Our six principles

It's important that no matter where the school age childcare is, all children taking part feel that the following principles are respected:

Kindness

(how we act towards each other)

We feel truly appreciated by childcare leaders, and this is obvious in their words and actions. We are encouraged to be kind to each other, and you get time out for bad behaviours but not kicked out!

Community

(how we relate to the world outside)

Everyone looks out for everyone else, and we aim to work as a team. We are always thinking about our local community, finding ways to work with other members (young and old) and the wider world. We like to get out into the local community for our activities, and we'd love opportunities to mix with children from other places.

Fairness

(how we make sure everyone's included and treated fairly)

Everyone's rights are understood and respected, and there are clear rules and expectations agreed by children in each place. Childcare leaders understand disabilities and emotional struggles, so everyone is supported and involved.

Happiness

(how we make sure everyone feels good)

We feel good about ourselves and get to eat good food, take rest, reduce stress, and have opportunities to stay active and try new things. We feel comfortable here.

Fun

(how we make sure our activities are always enjoyable and personally challenging)

We think everyone should have fun in the world. We need activities we enjoy, teach us new things, and help us be curious. It's important this feels different to school, and we are recognised and rewarded for our personal achievements. Risks and benefits are balanced so that adventures stay challenging, but are also safe!

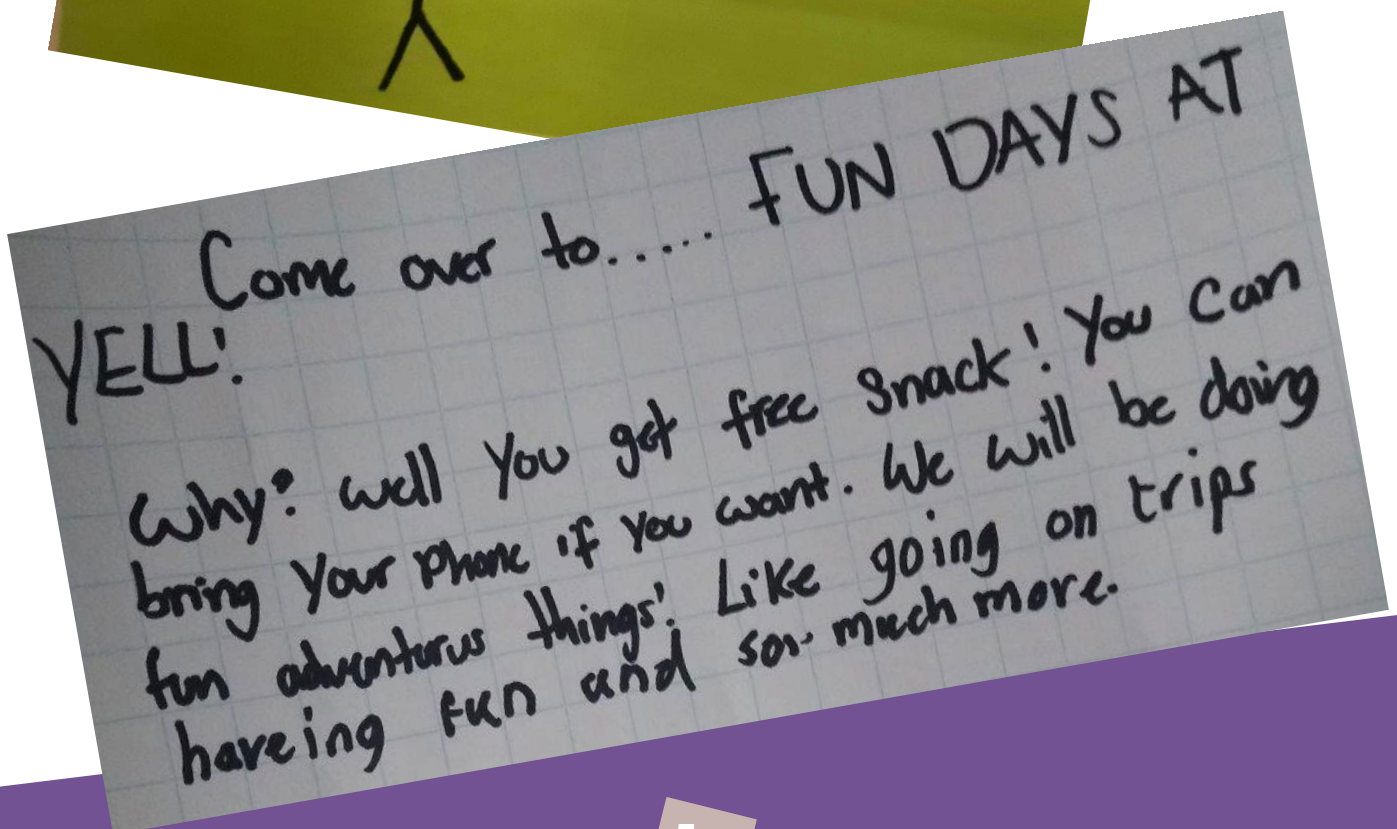
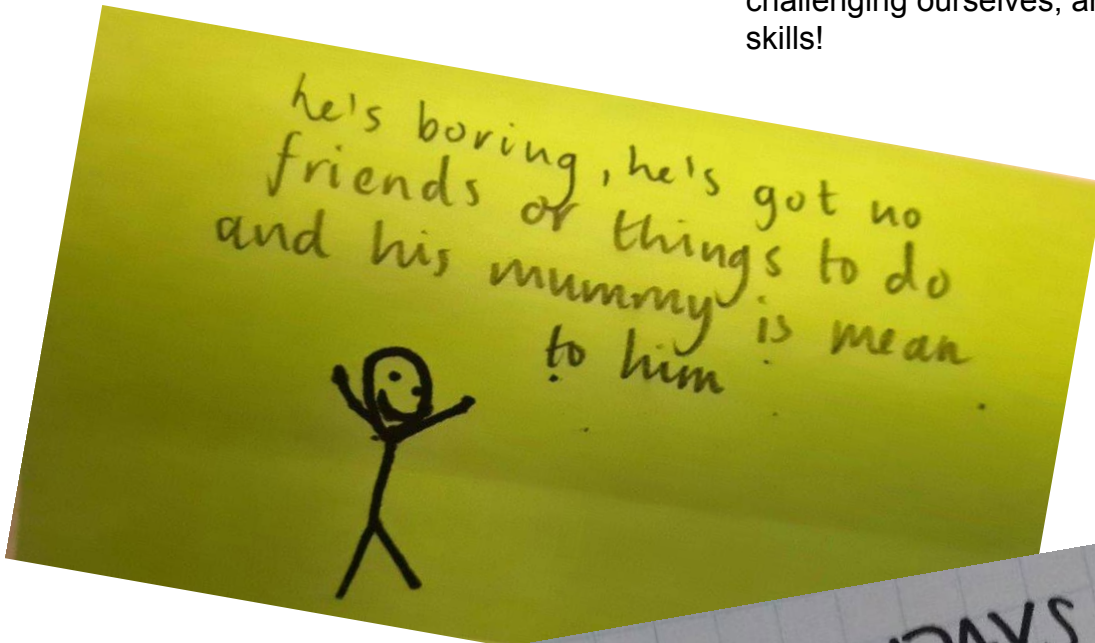
Choice

(how we make sure children make their own decisions)

We would like to have choice in the places we go to for childcare, to decide the activities that happen there, take part in activities (or no activities!), and have opportunities to lead activities ourselves. This includes taking part in fundraising, and learning how to take on new roles and responsibilities as we get older and more experienced. We would also like to have our say and be listened to when it comes to voting for leaders, activities, and interviewing new workers.

Why we need school age childcare

- To give our parents/carers the space to do the things they need to do, like work or study.
- So there is a caring place for us to go on weeknights, weekends, holidays, or if our families are ill or away from home.
- For everyone to get time for themselves – time for us, our parents and other family members to do the things we enjoy.
- It's a healthy and relaxing environment. This includes a break from stress, caring duties and home life for some of us.
- To hang out with our friends, make new ones, and do different stuff together. This is especially important for some of us who live in rural and remote areas, where we might live very far from our friends.
- Doing stuff we enjoy, going on adventures, challenging ourselves, and learning new skills!



The person or team caring for us

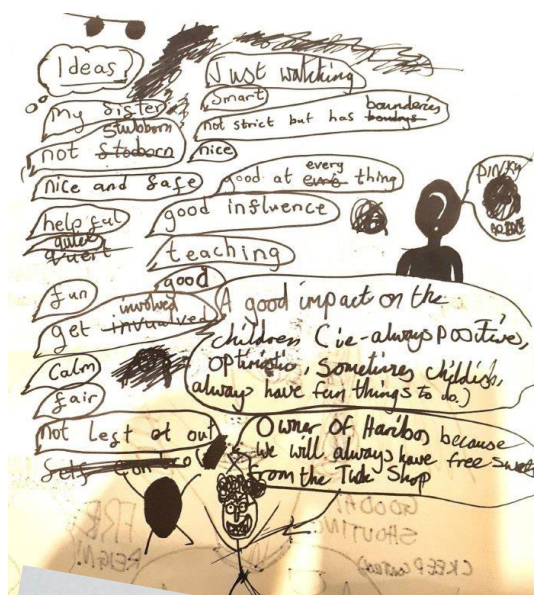
School age childcare might be run by one person, like a childminder, or it might be an out of school club with lots of different activities. For a club, we like the idea of it being run by a group of people all working together. For example, older children and elderly people (who might be too frail to take full responsibility for the club) might lead some activities.

The person or the team running childcare should be:

- Calm and patient. They don't shout at us or lose their temper.
- Fair, respect children and have clear boundaries and rules.
- Organised.
- Good at gathering ideas of what people want to do and then making it happen. This includes finding people with skills they don't have.
- Good at involving everyone, helping us work together and feel like a community.
- A good leader, but also part of the team. They don't sit on the side lines, and are curious and learn things with us. They challenge us to do and be our best.
- A trustworthy friend. They are kind-hearted, never mean, and are genuinely interested in us. I can share worries with them because they're good at understanding other people's feelings and give emotional support and hugs (if we want them).
- Courageous and responsible – well trained and good at keeping everyone and everything safe, including on trips and adventures.
- Fun, funny, cheerful and optimistic.
- Know and respect our rights.

Some people who might have these qualities include:

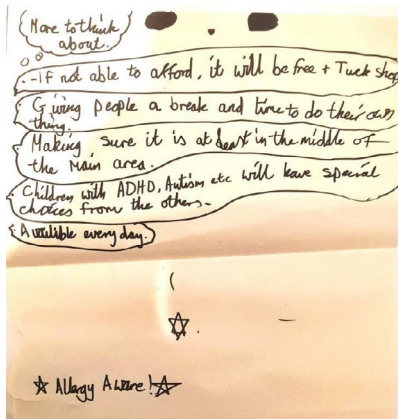
- Mums, Dads and Grandparents.
- Teachers and Pupil Support Assistants.
- Childminders and people who already run school age childcare.
- Our brothers and sisters.
- A superhero or someone famous.
- Us!



How to run school age childcare

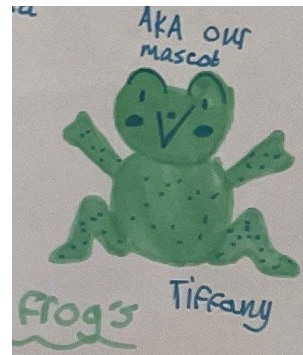
Funding:

- We need to make sure payments fit around when parents/carers get paid.
- Parents/carers who can't afford to pay can still send their child (and only the childcare leader or childminder would know they can't afford it!).
- We want to be involved in raising funds ourselves through donations, grants, fundraisers and business ventures (like bake sales and selling crafts).



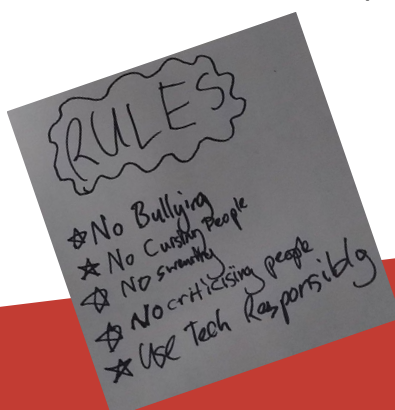
Promotion:

- Putting up posters in local schools, shops, leisure centres, and community halls.
- Posting things online, like on social media and YouTube.
- Using mascots – local and national. For example Tiffany the Frog, Kevin the Minion, and Derek the Trow (Shetland Troll) or Sheep.
- Involving local children. For instance by making adverts or storybooks to tell others about what's available and welcoming children to childcare.



Rules and Rewards:

- They need to be clear, based on our principles, and agreed with children in each place. Bullying should never be allowed.
- Leaders can help us get better at things by giving feedback and rewards when we make progress on our individual goals.
- If the person running the childcare is someone's parent/carer, they need to not show favouritism and not share secrets about their children to other people.



Food:

- Is a really important part of what we do together!
- A range of options, which balance healthy food and treats (e.g. pizza and macaroni).
- Snacks! (particularly after school)
- Maybe a tuck shop, sweets, but only sugary drinks on special occasions.
- Options for children with different dietary preferences and requirements (e.g. vegetarian, allergies, or because of our religion).



Where school age childcare takes place

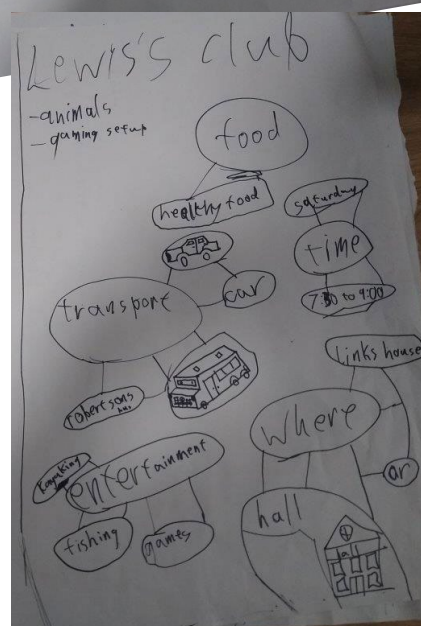
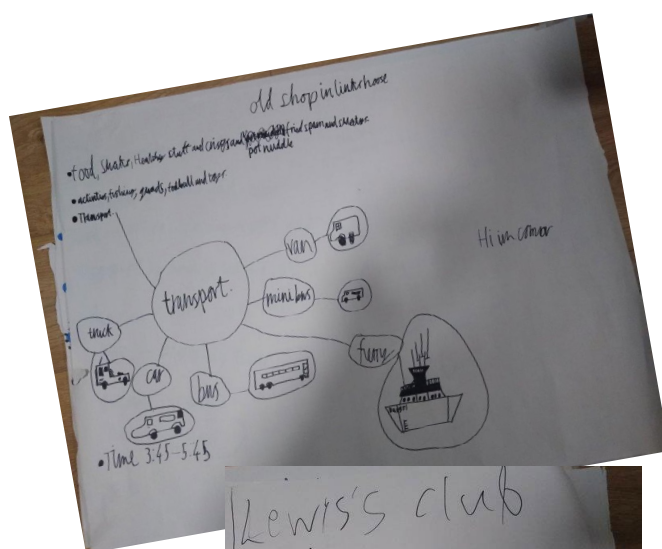
Each area of Scotland might have school age childcare in different places, and different families might need different support and places to go to. The places we found would be good for school age childcare are:

- **School buildings** – classrooms, games halls, sports pitches, playgrounds, gardens or dining halls. If school age childcare is in a school, it's important it feels different to school, by having no school work to do (unless we choose to do our homework), more choice, more comfortable places to relax, and more snacks.
- **Community centres** or village halls.
- **Leisure centres**, including sports halls, gyms and swimming pools.
- **Outdoors**, in local parks, playgrounds, woodlands, community gardens and other natural places.
- **Childminders' homes**.
- **Unused spaces** in our communities, like empty shops.
- Our proposed activities include **trips and adventures**, so we might sometimes go to further away places on weekends or holidays, like farms, zoos and museums!

Getting there and getting back

We all need to get to and from school age childcare safely, so it's important to think about:

- Maybe running mini buses in rural areas.
- Putting clubs in central places, so they're easy to get to.
- Making sure people with extra needs like disabilities are still included.



Activities we'd like to do

On weekdays, we're tired after school and don't have much time so we mostly want to rest and chill out.

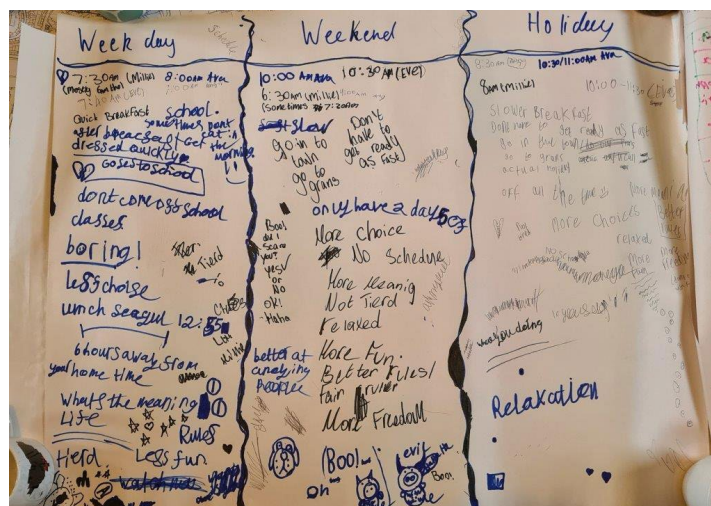
On **weekends**, we'd like to be able to have a lie in and start activities later than the school day starts, so we propose 11 a.m. – 4 p.m. We have more time and energy so we'd like to do more things outdoors and learn new skills (e.g. languages, cooking, and looking after animals). Some local trips could also be good.

During the **school holidays**, we like to do similar things as at the weekends, but we also have more time for longer trips (e.g. camping), learning new things, and creative projects (e.g. drama performance).

Activities we'd like to include all the time are:

- **Chillout** – read, draw, watch TV, YouTube and films, nap etc. A quiet room needs to be available for this.
- **Getting outdoors** – to the park, playground, walks, climbing trees, going to the woods and gardening.
- **Online gaming** – including Minecraft, Fortnite and VR. It would be fun to do this together rather than when just at home.
- **Creative and expressive arts** – drama, storytelling, singing, crafts, playing instruments, film-making, puppetry, and drawing.
- **Indoor activities** – board games, dodgeball, pool, table football.
- **Food** – visit local shops for ingredients to cook dinner or bake, grow food together, go out for dinner, or have BBQs.

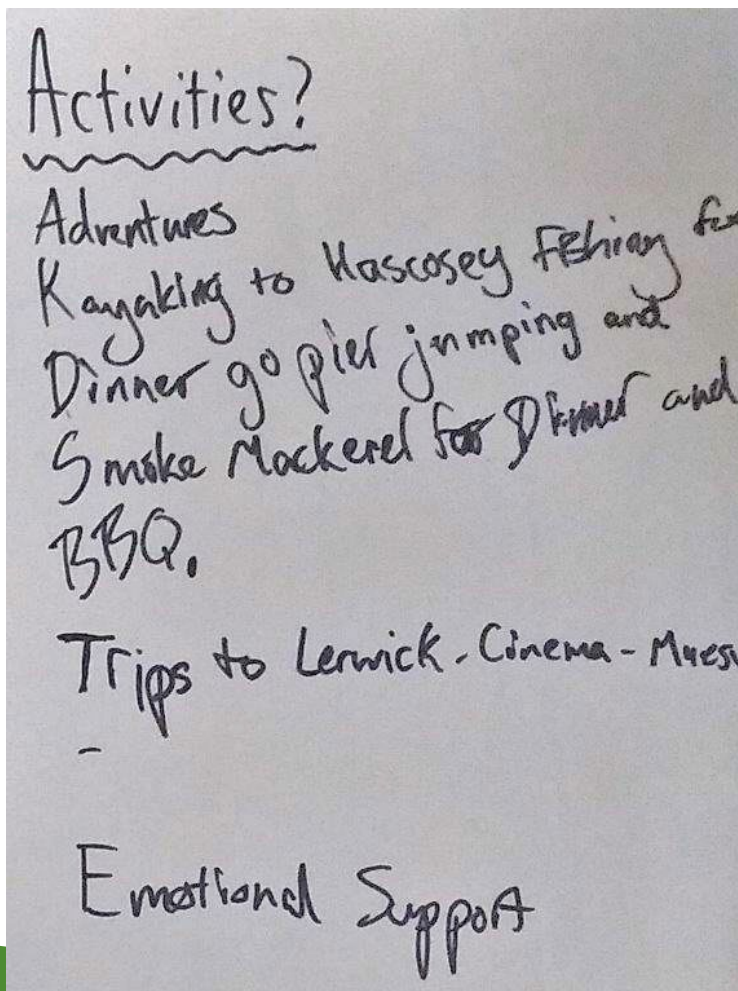
- **Sports** – football, swimming, basketball, netball, trampolining, and badminton. In rural areas where we don't have as many options close by we'd like tasters of activities we don't normally do like darts, archery and fencing.
- **Meet new people** and/or have a space to be with people that have the same interest or experience, like animals, science, caring for family members, or books.



More activities we'd like to do

At the weekends and in the holidays we would like to also include:

- **Animals** – we'd love an animal club, horse-riding, visiting farms and zoos, learning how to look after them, and about the natural world in general (e.g. how birds fly).
- **New skills** – languages, budgeting, general life skills, martial arts, coding, skiing, fixing things, tying knots in rope, quad biking, exercise/body building, and business.
- **Trips** – museums, beaches, camping, activity centres, cinema trips, and visiting other villages, towns and cities.
- **Adventures** – stargazing, kayaking, visiting islands, fishing, hiking, wild swimming, camping, visiting beaches, and treasure hunting. We'd love to connect these activities up into a single adventure!
- **Construction** – we'd like to learn woodwork and make fences, forts, doors, go-karts, and other useful or interesting things.
- **Making a difference** – for example, work on recycling in the local area through an Eco Group, pack food boxes for people that need them, or do a heritage project where we learn stories from the community and write these down to preserve them for the future.



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