

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Education and Children's Services Committee
DATE	17 September 2024
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	School Age Childcare Policy
REPORT NUMBER	F&C/24/235
DIRECTOR	Eleanor Sheppard
CHIEF OFFICER	Shona Milne
REPORT AUTHORS	Louise Beaton and Mark Duguid
TERMS OF REFERENCE	1.1.1 and 1.1.5

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Committee approval for the reviewed and refreshed Aberdeen City Council School Age Childcare Policy, as per the instruction from Committee on 20 February 2024 ([CFS/24/014](#)).

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:-

- 2.1 Notes the work undertaken with key stakeholders to review and refresh the Aberdeen City Council Out of School Care Policy, in line with national policy and updated guidance, and;
- 2.2 Approves the School Age Childcare Policy and the Agreement (Appendices 1 and 2), which have been reviewed for approval by the Council's Policy Group and Risk Board.

3. CURRENT SITUATION

Background

- 3.1 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 school 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.
- 3.2 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 wraparound childcare when their children

start Primary School. In our recent Early Learning and Childcare consultation with Parents and Carers (June 2023), 45.2% of respondents indicated that they will require School Age Childcare when their child(ren) start Primary School.

- 3.3 Registered School Age Childcare provisions are regulated by the Care Inspectorate and are subject to ongoing inspection. Inspections in Aberdeen continue to be positive with almost all provisions receiving an average grading of 4 (Good) or better.

School Age Childcare Delivery Framework 2023

- 3.4 The National Framework for Delivery of School Age Childcare was published by the Scottish Government in October 2023, along with a Children's Charter for School Age Childcare, including a specific Charter for School Age Childcare in Aberdeen.

- 3.5 The National Delivery Framework outlines the Scottish Government's School Age Childcare commitments and the action areas for the next 3 years. Its key policy drivers are: Tackling child poverty; and improving outcomes for children and families, with the Framework highlighting that an expanded childcare offering for school age childcare is crucial to the national mission to tackle child poverty, to promote family wellbeing, drive greater gender equality and to #Keep The Promise to our care experienced children.

Supply and Demand

- 3.6 We regularly monitor supply and demand across the city and work with our external School Age Childcare partners to support the establishment of new services, where viable, following feasibility studies. Sometimes the uptake of spaces does not match the initial interest noted by local families. However, we continue to monitor this situation closely.

- 3.7 A map has been created to provide a visual overview of where School Age Childcare is located across the [city](#)

School Age Childcare Policy and Agreement

- 3.8 The purpose of the policy (please see Appendix 1) is to promote improvement and embed quality within provision in Aberdeen, and to establish links between School Age Childcare and other local and national strategies and policies: e.g. *Realising the Ambition*; *Best Start: Strategic Early Learning and School Age Childcare plan for Scotland 2022-26*; *School Age Childcare Delivery Framework 2023*; GIRFEC Practice Statement - Child's Plan 2023; Care Inspectorate SIMOA (Safety, Inspect, Monitor, Observe, Act); and Space To Grow: Indoor/outdoor settings. It seeks to develop innovative and inclusive services in partnership with communities, schools, parents and carers, children and young people and a wide range of external agencies.
- 3.9 Aberdeen City Council's policy is that all schools will work with parents and School Age Childcare providers to ensure access to suitable locations, to establish and support School Age Childcare where there is sufficient parental demand and where it is viable and cost effective.

- 3.10 A key feature of this policy is to work with existing and future partners to best meet the needs of children, families and communities, including school communities.
- 3.11 This policy ensures access to high quality registered services for all children regardless of need, background or ability as set out in the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 and it acknowledges the significance of children's rights, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989 which was approved by the UK Government in 1991 and adopted by Aberdeen City Council in 1996.
- 3.12 In order to deliver a high quality provision, a School Age Childcare Agreement will be completed for each venue with local arrangements being taken into consideration. The document (please see Appendix 2) will be made available to School Age Childcare providers on the Council website.
- 3.13 The policy includes:
- Structure and Delivery of School Age Childcare.
 - Local Authority and Stakeholder responsibilities.
 - Good Practice Guidelines, including access to premises and resources, and communication.
 - Promotion of School Age Childcare.
 - School Age Childcare Policy Agreement.
- 3.14 The policy replaces the previous Out of School Care Policy (2017) and includes general updates required and inclusion onto the corporate Council template.
- 3.15 The policy has been reviewed for approval by the Council's Policy Group and Risk Board.

Engagement with Key Stakeholders

- 3.16 It was important to engage and consult with key stakeholders associated with the provision of School Age Childcare, operating within buildings owned and/or managed by Aberdeen City Council, as part of the refresh of the policy process.
- 3.17 This included School Age Childcare providers, staff working in settings, Head Teachers and Heads of Establishments, community colleagues, facilities colleagues and parents and carers.
- 3.18 All stakeholders were sent a copy of the previous Out of School Care policy (2017) and were given the opportunity to attend an online or in-person focus group meeting to discuss, review and suggest any changes required for updating the new policy.
- 3.19 Once the initial period of engagement was completed, the policy was updated to reflect feedback and suggestions from all participants. A draft was then shared with all focus group attendees in the first instance, giving each stakeholder the opportunity to review feedback made by other stakeholders and to make any further comments.

- 3.20 We then collated all further suggested amendments and updated the draft policy accordingly. Finally, we consulted more widely with all stakeholders, including parents and carers, for a period of 3 weeks before finalising the draft policy for Policy Group, Risk Board and Committee approval.

Engagement with Parents and Carers

- 3.21 As part of our statutory duties under the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, we are required to consult with parents and carers every two years on the provision of daycare of children's services. The Early Learning and Childcare team consulted with parents and carers in December 2023 and January 2024 on the provision of School Age Childcare in Aberdeen. The consultation received a total of 549 responses after 5 weeks (+1% from 2021).
- 3.22 The findings from our recent School Age Childcare consultation with parents and carers, as reported to Committee in February 2024, have also informed the refresh of the Aberdeen City Council School Age Childcare Policy.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no financial implications arising as a result of this report.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Unlike Early Learning and Childcare (ELC), School Age Childcare is not currently a statutory service. However, under the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, Aberdeen City Council is responsible for engaging and consulting with parents and carers on a regular basis (minimum of every 2 years) on the provision of daycare of children's services delivered locally and this includes School Age Childcare. We continue to meet our statutory obligations in relation to this duty.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The funding secured from Inspiring School Age Childcare Spaces (ISACS) fund has been invested in outdoor spaces at four settings, enhancing spaces and outdoor play and learning opportunities. Across all School Age Childcare settings, good use is also made of outdoor and green spaces where practicable and where feasible to do so.
- 6.2 The provision of School Age Childcare within local communities has environmental benefits if less travel is made by car and more active travel taken.
- 6.3 School Age Childcare providers should be mindful of environmental considerations and ensure that lights are switched off and taps turned off after use in their registered space.

7. RISK

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H) *taking into account controls/control actions	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
Strategic Risk	No risks identified	N/A	N/A	N/A
Compliance	No risks identified	N/A	L	Yes
Operational	Risk of not attracting enough new practitioners into the workforce.	Mitigated through the ongoing activities being undertaken to support workforce development.	L	Yes
Financial	Risk of building a financially unsustainable model.	<p>School Age Childcare is currently an accessible but paid for service, with discounts available for families on lower incomes using Aberdeen City Council operated provision. Officers regularly monitor supply and demand in order to maximise resources and achieve best value.</p> <p>We have been careful to build our School Age Childcare services gradually to ensure it meets demand but is also sustainable. For example, delivering services for children from more than one school.</p>	M	Yes
Reputational	Risk of not delivering on legal obligations	There are currently no statutory obligations to deliver School Age Childcare. However, we try to ensure we	L	Yes

		meet demand, where viable.		
Environment / Climate	No risks identified	N/A	N/A	N/A

8. OUTCOMES

<u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN</u>	
	Impact of Report
Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement	<p>The proposals within this report support the delivery of the policy statement “Work with the Scottish Government to expand free early learning and childcare to one and two year-olds from low-income households.”</p> <p>The provision of funded Early Learning and Childcare has the potential to be transformational for many families, but especially for those with the lowest incomes in the city.</p> <p>The provision of School Age Childcare is required in order to meet the continued need for wraparound care once children start to attend Primary School. This is backed up by 45.2% of respondents, in our recent Early Learning and Childcare consultation with Parents and Carers (June 2023), who indicated that they will require School Age Childcare when their child(ren) start Primary School.</p>
<u>Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan</u>	
Economy	<p>The School Age Childcare Policy and delivery of School Age Childcare in Aberdeen will continue to have a positive impact on this priority theme and will help to deliver the LOIP.</p> <p>The provision of School Age Childcare supports more families to take up employment and training opportunities, thus also helping to reduce poverty. This will contribute to the Stretch Outcome to achieve a 74% employment rate for Aberdeen City by 2026</p> <p>In addition, we have introduced a Modern Apprenticeship position into our School Age Childcare staffing structure. This involves training young people to become Playworkers as part of our ‘Grow Our Own’ workforce strategy. This is a new</p>

	<p>role in our Local Authority School Age Childcare settings and provides a positive destination and career pathway for our young people as well as strengthening our workforce. We currently have 4 Modern Apprenticeships working across the city.</p>
<p>People</p>	<p>The School Age Childcare Policy and delivery of School Age Childcare in Aberdeen will continue to have a positive impact on this priority theme and will help to deliver the LOIP.</p> <p>The policy will support the achievement of LOIP objectives to make Aberdeen a place where all children and young people can grow up loved, safe and respected so that they can all realise their full potential.</p> <p>School Age Childcare can improve long term outcomes for children and families.</p>
<p>Place</p>	<p>The School Age Childcare Policy and delivery of School Age Childcare in Aberdeen will continue to have a positive impact on this priority theme and will help to deliver the LOIP.</p> <p>The increase in funded ELC is designed to enable more families to take up employment and training opportunities, thus reducing poverty. More hours are now available in Local Authority ELC settings and Funded Provider ELC settings are now an option for many families who could not afford this previously.</p> <p>This means that there is also a need to ensure sufficient School Age Childcare is available to support families when their children go to Primary School.</p> <p>The policy will contribute to what we can do even more to promote and improve the positive qualities of Aberdeen as a place to live, work, and visit.</p>
<p>Regional and City Strategies</p> <p>Strategic Development Plan</p> <p>Children's Services Plan</p>	<p>The proposals within this report support the Strategic Development Plan by supporting the workforce. The provision of high quality School Age Childcare will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Support families to take up employment and training opportunities;

National Improvement Framework Plan	<p>2. Develop the Young Workforce; and 3. Support business to recruit and retain staff.</p> <p>The Delivery Framework for School Age Childcare is aligned to the Children’s Services Plan and the National Improvement Framework Plan and work to address poverty in the Child Poverty Action Plan.</p>
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9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Integrated Impact Assessment	Previous Integrated Impact Assessment relating to the provision of School Age Childcare has been reviewed and no changes are required.
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required. As no personal information will be shared.
Other	None

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 Scottish Government: National Framework for School Age Childcare

11. APPENDICES

11.1 Appendix 1 – School Age Childcare Policy (Draft)

11.2 Appendix 2 – School Age Childcare Agreement (Draft)

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