

Questions

1 What range of services are needed:

Regulated out of school care, Childminders, Activity-based clubs and programmes (such as sports clubs, creative arts clubs, outdoor activities)

If other, please specify.:

Can you tell us why these services are important?:

Families have different needs at different times, and therefore a broad range of services is desirable. From our work with families living with learning difficulties, we are aware that not all services are suitable for children and young people with learning difficulties. All services should pledge to be as inclusive as possible. Ideally, services should have suitably trained staff but as a minimum, all should have access to expert advice on how to support all forms of neurodiversity.

2 What can we do to support community based approaches to delivering out of school care?

What can we do to support community based approaches to delivering out of school care?:

As in Q1, as a minimum, all services should have access to expert advice on how to support all forms of neurodiversity.

3 What name should we use for the range of out of school services and activities? Is there a better term than 'Out of School Care'?

What name should we use for the range of out of school services and activities? Is there a better term than 'Out of School Care':

Children and Young People's Opportunities Scotland OR

Young Scotland Services OR

Formative Services for Scotland

4 To enable us to realise our vision, we have identified three key aims that we will need to achieve -

Yes

Please explain your response.:

The 3 key aims are good, if somewhat broad. Is it the case that the aims will include considering the gaps in service and the resources, including both financial and in terms of suitably trained personnel, that will be required to deliver on the vision? Is there a timeframe for delivery of the vision?

5 How can we help to ensure that all families have access to an out of school care place for their child/ren if they want it?

How can we help to ensure that all families have access to an out of school care place for their child/ren if they want it?:

Remove cost barriers (see Q8). Ensure a variety of provision. Increase provision – many families have to apply for an out of school place while their child is still in nursery and can be on a waiting list(s) for a year or more.

6 What do children and young people want from out of school care services and does this differ dependent on age?

What do children and young people want from out of school care services and does this differ dependent on age?:

7 What different activities or provision might secondary school aged children want?

What different activities or provision might secondary school aged children want?:

8 How can we make sure out of school care is an affordable option for more families? (e.g. subsidised provision, remove barriers in accessing benefits, help with upfront costs)

How can we make sure out of school care is an affordable option for more families? (e.g. subsidised provision, remove barriers in accessing benefits, help with upfront costs):

Create a centrally funded national service that is offered at no cost/minimal cost to all families.

9 How can services be more effectively delivered in rural/remote areas to meet the needs of families?

How can services be more effectively delivered in rural/remote areas to meet the needs of families?:

Large employers in rural areas could be encouraged to provide a service at the workplace. Transport subsidies could help families. Enhanced childminding fees could be subsidised to encourage a growth in the childminding workforce in rural areas.

10 How can we ensure that children with disabilities and additional support needs can access out of school care services?

How can we ensure that children with disabilities and additional support needs can access out of school care services?:

Families of children with learning difficulties that we support have repeatedly identified the following issues. Therefore, resources should be targeted towards these areas in order to provide equal opportunities for all families to access out of school care services:

- Cost is frequently a barrier
- There are insufficient appropriately trained staff who are able to meet the needs of children with learning difficulties – this leads families to turn to their own networks to make provision for their children
- There are not enough staff to provide the right amount of support
- Some families have neurotypical children as well as children with learning difficulties and they find it hard to co-ordinate appropriate care for all siblings
- Out of school care staff and/or childminders do not feel confident about meeting the needs of children with learning difficulties and they are therefore reluctant to offer places.

11 What flexibility do parents and carers need from out of school care services? Can you tell us why this flexibility is important?

What flexibility do parents and carers need from out of school care services? Can you tell us why this flexibility is important?:

As much as they may need flexibility, parents/carers also need consistency. This is especially important for children with learning difficulties for whom change may be distressing. For those children it is important to have continuity and routine in terms of location and staffing.

12 What is important for parents and carers in terms of location of out of school care services? Should they be delivered in schools, community facilities, outdoors?

What is important for parents and carers in terms of location of out of school care services? Should they be delivered in schools, community facilities, outdoors?:

The needs of children and young people with learning difficulties are extremely diverse. A broad range of settings for out of school care services is necessary to ensure that those diverse needs can be met.

13 What ages of children do parents/carers need provision for?

What ages of children do parents/carers need provision for? :

Families with children with learning difficulties may need provision for their child from pre-school up to age 16 and beyond.

14 Do parents/carers need food provision as part of after-school and holiday clubs?

Yes

Please explain your answer.:

In general, food provision will be helpful for most families. However, children with learning difficulties may have eating problems or sensitivities, and therefore the provision of food should be offered in line with the advice and preferences of individual parents/carers/children.

15 What qualifications, skills and experience should the out of school care workforce have? What is most important and why?

What qualifications, skills and experience should the out of school care workforce have? What is most important and why? :

Knowledge of child development and an understanding of neurodiversity are most important. There are increasing numbers of children being identified as having conditions such as autism, ADHD or dyslexia that give rise to learning difficulties. Often those children have found the school day to be extremely stressful, so after-school care should be a place where they can relax and unwind. Staff in such provision should have an awareness of how children with learning difficulties may react after a long, stressful day – ‘meltdowns’ need to be recognised as communication about distress. In addition, all staff working with children should have at least a basic qualification in child protection/safeguarding.

16 Thinking about the full range of provision - regulated out of school care, childminders, holiday programmes and other activities - should qualification requirements for staff working across these provisions be the same or different? Why?

Thinking about the full range of provision - regulated out of school care, childminders, holiday programmes and other activities - should qualification requirements for staff working across these provisions be the same or different? Why?:

The children are the same no matter where they are being looked after so there should be at least a baseline of qualifications for all.

17 How can we promote working in the out of school care sector as a more attractive career choice?

How can we promote working in the out of school care sector as a more attractive career choice?:

The status of childcare needs to be elevated and its importance to a flourishing society should be recognised. For all, and especially those with additional qualifications, there should be higher rates of pay to reflect the value placed on childcare as a profession.

18 How can we increase diversity across the out of school care workforce?

How can we increase diversity across the out of school care workforce?:

Careers advisers should be encouraged to recommend childcare as a career to a wider mix of secondary school pupils.