

RE-OPENING SURVEY OCTOBER 2020 RESULTS

Out of School
Care Workforce
Statistics



Scottish Out of School Care Network

supporting children's
rights to play, care
and learning



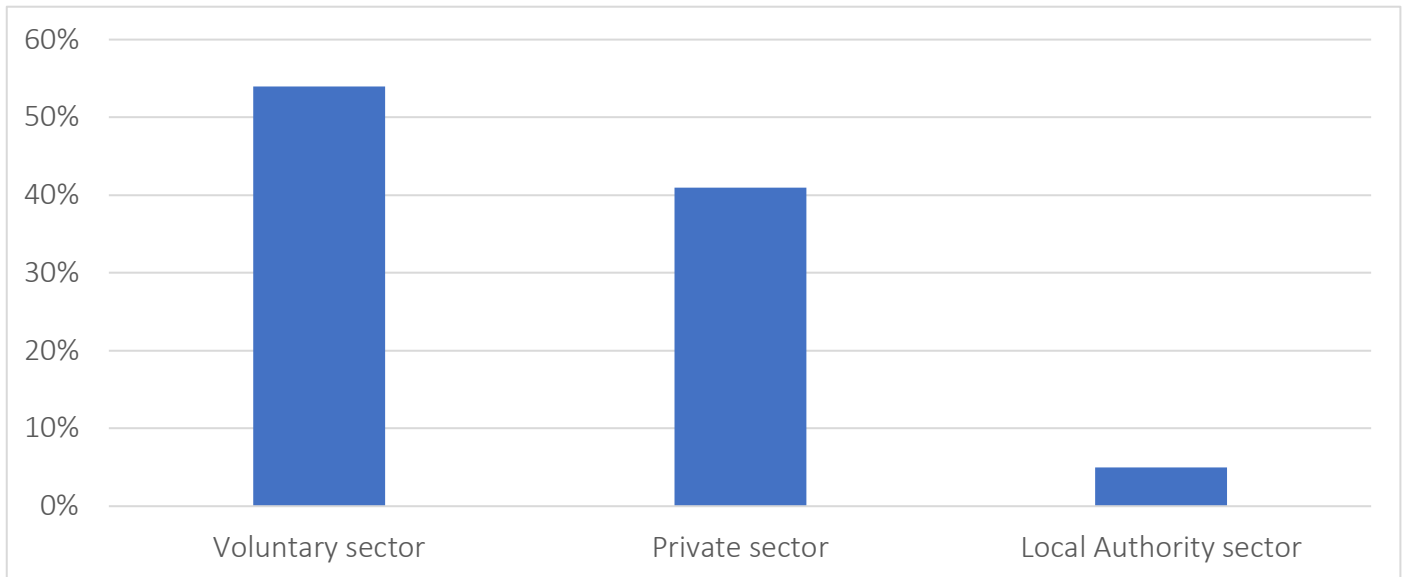
INTRODUCTION

The Scottish Out of School Care Network conducted an online survey about the issues out of school care services have faced reopening during the COVID-19 pandemic. The survey consisted of 10 questions and was open throughout October 2020. We would like to thank all services which participated in this survey- your responses are highly valued.

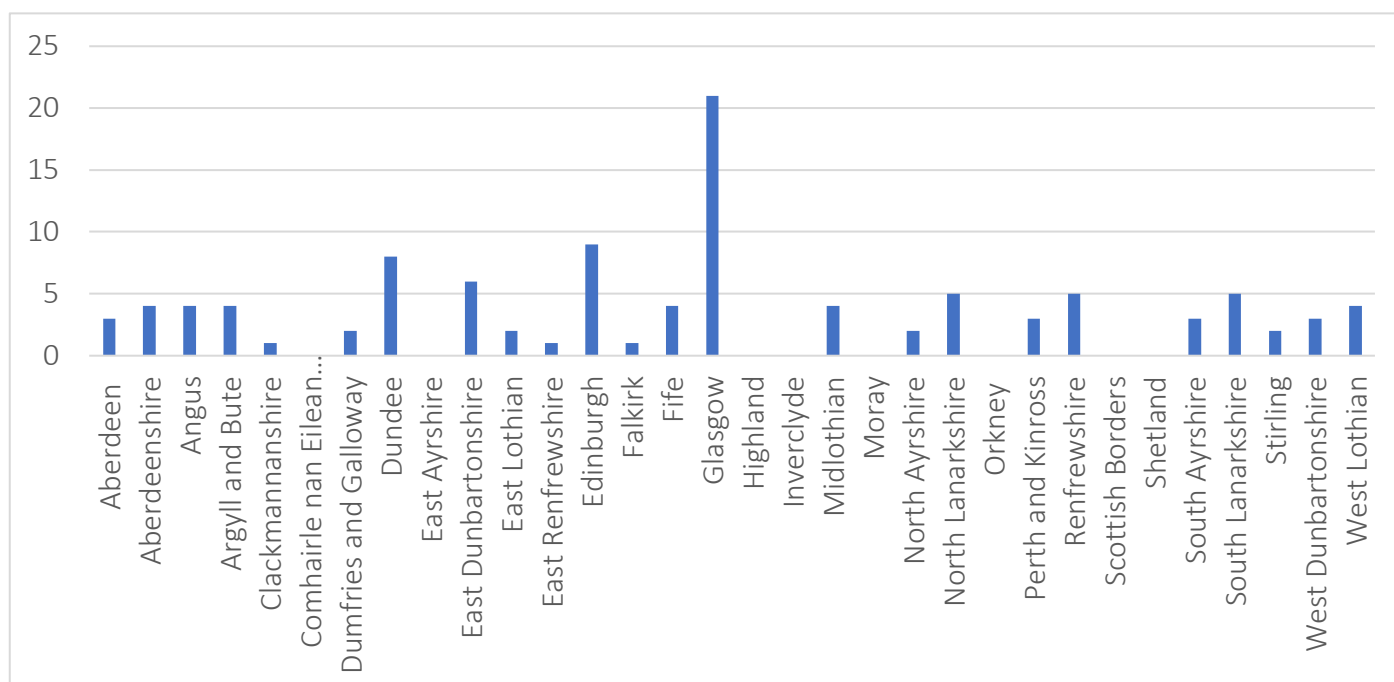
Total number of responses	103
Total number of out of school care organisations	103
Total number of out of school care services	222
Total number of registered places	9,775
Total number of children registered	10,732

1. PLEASE INDICATE IF YOU ARE A VOLUNTARY, PRIVATE OR LOCAL AUTHORITY SECTOR SERVICE

	Voluntary sector	Private sector	Local Authority sector
count	55	42	5
percent	54%	41%	5%

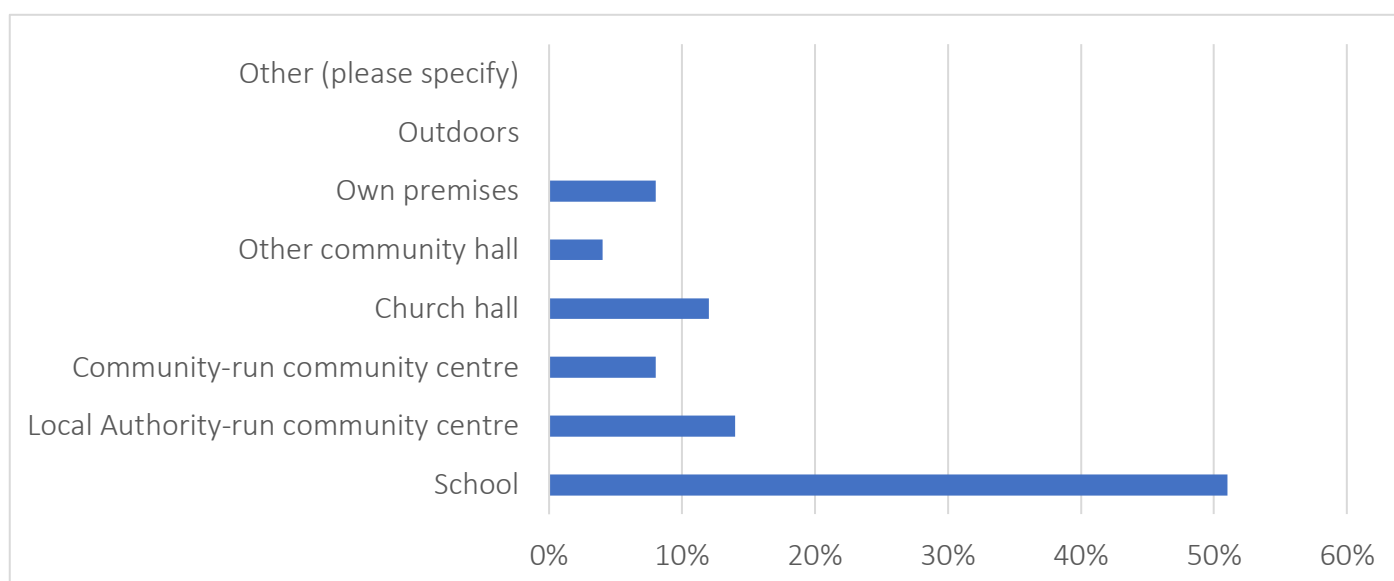


2. IN WHICH LOCAL AUTHORITY DO YOU OPERATE? IF YOU OPERATE SERVICES IN DIFFERENT AREAS, PLEASE SELECT ALL AREAS IN WHICH THEY ARE LOCATED



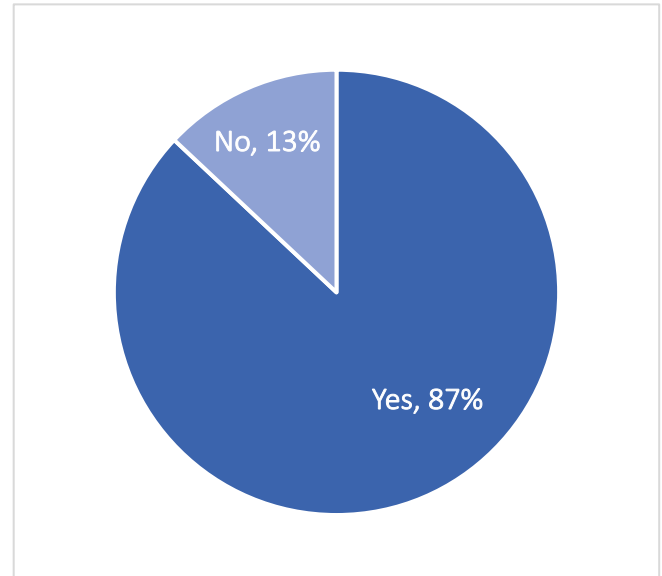
3. IN WHICH PREMISES IS (ARE) YOUR SERVICE(S) LOCATED? IF YOU HAVE MULTIPLE SITES, SELECT ALL WHICH APPLY

	School	Local authority-run community centre	Community-run community centre	Church hall	Other community hall	Own premises	Outdoors	Other (Please Specify)
count	61	17	9	14	5	10	0	0
percent	51%	14%	8%	12%	4%	8%	0%	0%



4. HAS (HAVE ALL) YOUR SERVICE(S) RE-OPENED?

	Yes	No
count	90	13
percent	87%	13%



5. IF YOU ANSWERED 'NO' TO QUESTION 5, COULD YOU PLEASE TELL US WHY NOT

Afternoons have opened but not our Early morning care due to lack of numbers (28 per day before lockdown 6-8 per day after).

Premises no longer available and business not financially viable at present. We are reviewing this termly.

1 service has temporarily closed to reduce the amount of premises that are required to open.

Morning service closed due to staff restrictions on working in two childcare settings.

Had to close a morning one due to lack of demand.

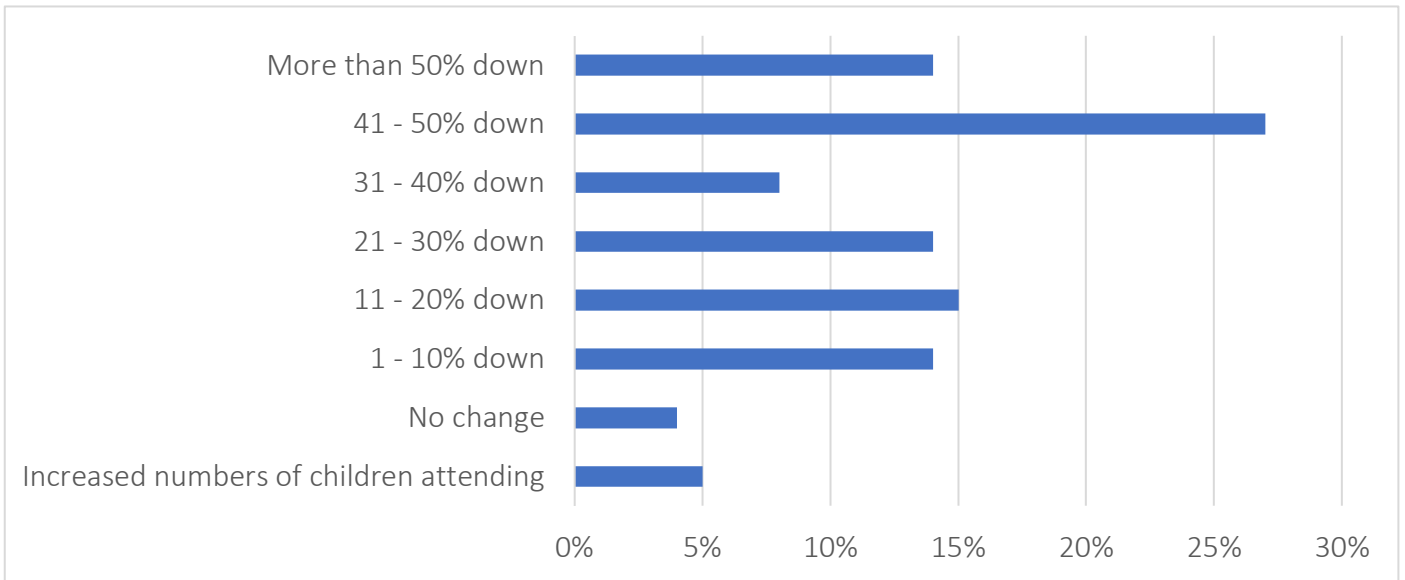
Staffing issues and low numbers of children.

We have 2 out of school cares. One was a busy service so operated over 2 bases. We have reduced to one base due to numbers.

Falling attendance numbers prior to COVID, then one staff member got new job. Did not wish to recruit new staff with indefinite start date and not sure if previous users of service would continue to use service with many parents working from home. So, we took the decision to close the club.

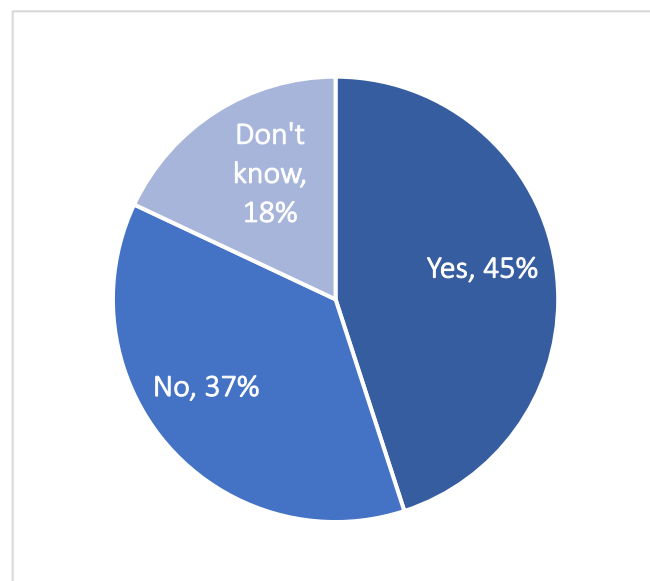
6. HOW ARE YOUR NUMBERS ATTENDING? WHAT CHANGE ARE YOU EXPERIENCING FROM PRE-PANDEMIC SITUATION?

	Increased numbers of children attending	No change-same number of children attending	1 - 10% down	11 - 20% down	21 - 30% down	31 - 40% down	41 - 50% down	More than 50% down
count	5	4	14	15	14	8	27	14
percent	5%	4%	14%	15%	14%	8%	27%	14%



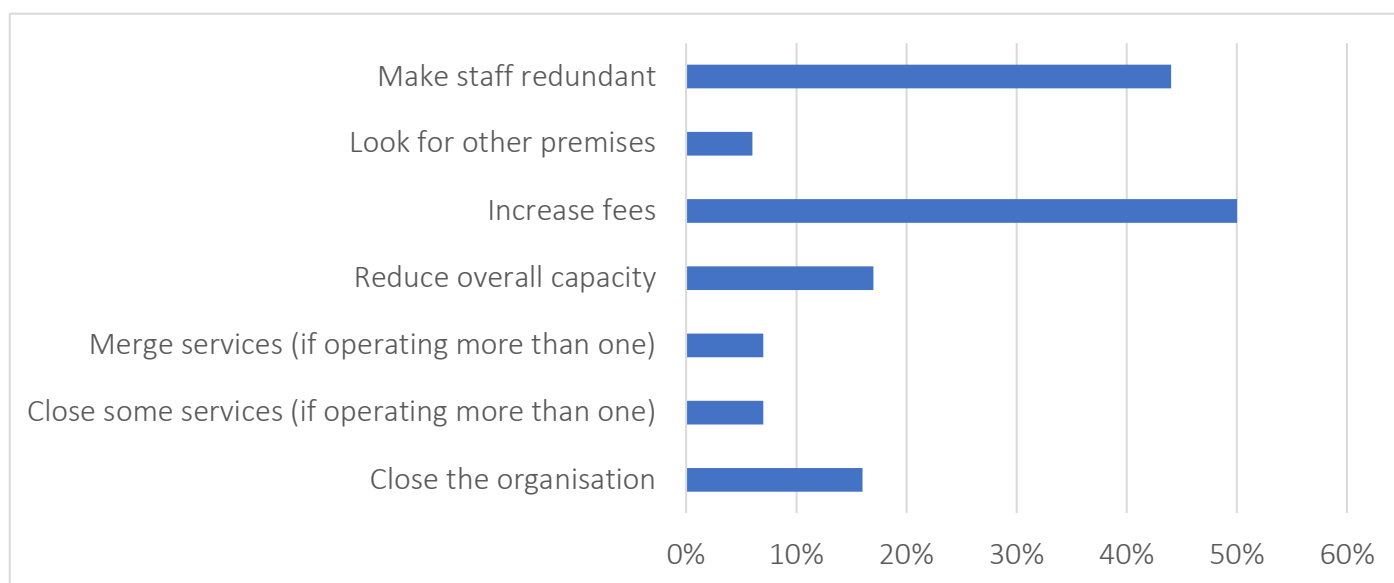
7. IF CURRENT ATTENDANCE LEVELS REMAIN THE SAME FOR THE NEXT COUPLE OF MONTHS, DO YOU THINK THIS WILL AFFECT YOUR LONG-TERM FINANCIAL VIABILITY?

	Yes	No	Don't know
count	44	36	18
percent	45%	37%	18%



8. IF NUMBERS CONTINUE TO BE REDUCED, DO YOU ANTICIPATE THAT YOU WILL HAVE TO DO ANY OF THE FOLLOWING WITHIN THE NEXT COUPLE OF MONTHS? (PLEASE SELECT ALL WHICH APPLY)

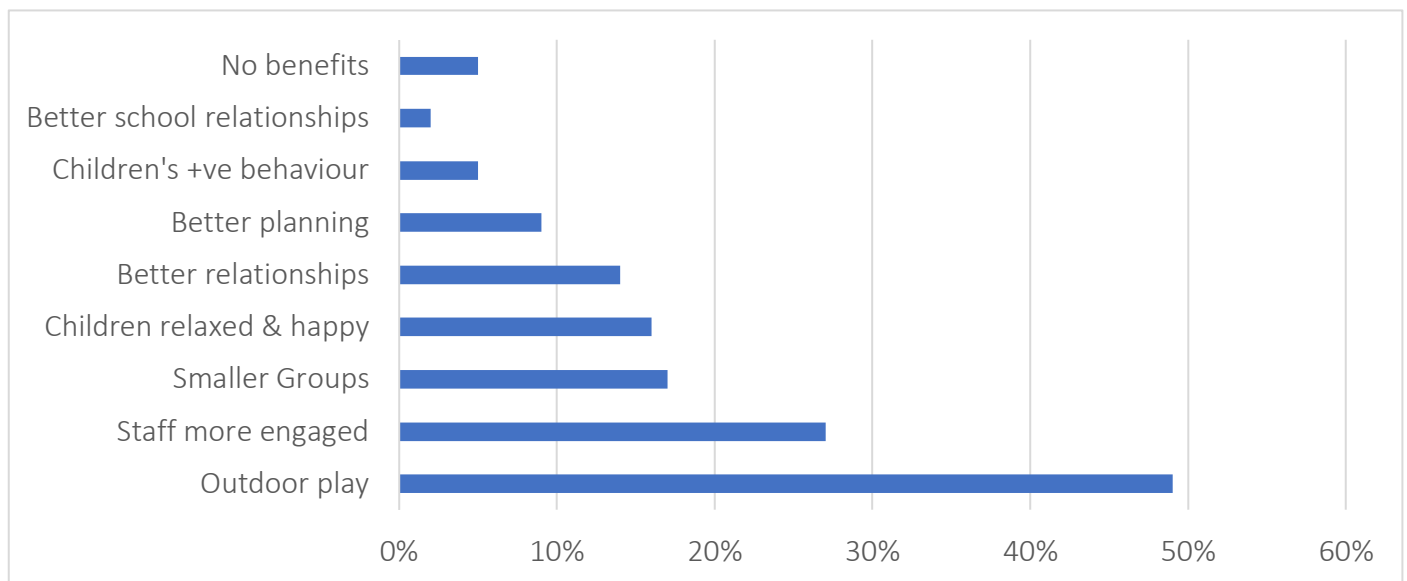
	Close the organisation	Close some services (if operating more than one)	Merge services (if operating more than one)	Reduce overall capacity	Increase fees	Look for other premises	Make staff redundant
count	16	7	7	17	52	6	45
percent	16%	7%	7%	17%	50%	6%	44%



9. MANY SERVICES HAVE REPORTED POSITIVE EXPERIENCES DUE TO THE NECESSARY CHANGES IN PRACTICE E.G. MORE OUTDOOR PLAY, STAFF ARE MORE ENGAGED- WHAT POSITIVES HAVE YOU NOTICED?

There was a wide range of responses to this question however, it was possible to analyse responses thematically:

Benefit	Outdoor play	Staff more engaged	Smaller Groups	Children relaxed & happy	Better relationships	Better planning	Children's +ve behaviour	Better school relationships	No benefits
percent	49%	27%	17%	16%	14%	9%	5%	2%	5%



Following is a selection of comments:

Staff have really stepped up and are doing things in their own time, all coming in early and helping with cleaning and setting up, staying late to do additional cleaning, asking to take tasks off me (possibly because they can see the affect the stress of it all has had on me) all in all they have made me really proud how they have all risen to the challenge and got on with it.

Smaller groups have meant more consistency for the children and staff to build relationships and plan for their specific needs and interests more easily.

More outdoor play, more engagement from staff, more forward thinking in staff team, children seem very calm and settled.

More outdoor play, children happier in smaller groups, service more structured/routined than before, much less time dealing with snack-related issues, positive behaviour-related outcomes, younger children thriving, staff/children relationships have had positive outcomes due to same staff working with same children, relationship with school has improved, very positive outcomes in staff team work/relationships, children with additional support needs are thriving.

Children are even more delighted to attend and are far more eager to join in physical and outdoor activities.

More outdoor play, smaller groups suit many children who feel more secure (being in their own area also helps and reduces "drifting" throughout the session), staff are working more closely in pairs and have more autonomy over their space and can support the children to make their space their own, staff get to know the children in their groups very well, the environment has improved - less cluttered and enhanced cleaning from the council alongside the staff cleaning throughout the day has enhanced the play spaces. We are seeing fewer incidents due to conflict (could be a number of reasons for this, smaller groups, in groups with their peers, spending more time out of doors) staff report they feel safe returning to work because of the public health measures in place.

Yes, more children wanting outdoor play which is always a daily occurrence now other children encouraged to join in. Staff feel more comfortable just now outdoors than being indoors.

To be honest we are fighting each day to survive with increased cleaning and reduced staff. The ability of the children to adapt is a major positive but it is hard to see this through the constant regime of cleaning.

The children's behaviour has been much more settled, they are getting on better with each other and seem to really appreciate being together again and getting the opportunity to play and have fun. Staff are enjoying being back at work and being with the children and the overall atmosphere at work is more relaxed as everyone is appreciating what we are able to do. The children are loving being outside more. We bought National Trust Scotland memberships which enables us to use a local NTS garden for outdoor play, we bought walkie talkies and the children love running about in the NTS gardens with the walkie talkies making up hide and seek games. We are all enjoying hearing their happy chatter and squeals of delight when playing together.

Staff have reported the use of "groups" to be a positive change, especially with siblings. Children are able to form their own friends rather than tagging on beside older siblings. Staff have commented on the positive way in which all staff take their fair share of duties, cleaning etc. Staff are more engaging with the children in their groups. We were having difficulty previously with 1 head teacher who did not want her in the school, the pandemic has helped us to form a better relationship with her and communication is more open.

All children are playing outside most days. Many are experiencing different activities, e.g. those who previously preferred to do sedentary activities indoors (table top crafts) indoors are now outdoors taking part in physical play. Children are in small groups with a staff leader and spaces are rotated daily and weekly as they chose. Children who normally play football every day are also now spending time in the woods or digging in the allotment (and enjoying it). The children can identify which adult is there for them which provides consistency for them. For the same reason, the workload seems to be shared more evenly between playworkers. We have started off with a reduced number of children. This has been good for playworkers and children alike as they all have more time for each other and adults seem more relaxed. Snack time is reduced as we have no buffet and so children get to play sooner. The snack choice is more limited but children say they are enjoying it. We are providing a choice of bananas and tangerines, pre-packaged cheese and yoghurts which is served to the children in their groups. The children look healthy and happy. I communicated regularly with parents via email and Facebook during lockdown and we delivered playpacks to the children. This has been great for relationships with families and has continued as we have reopened.

Staff more engaged with children; staff more supportive of each other staff; more responsive to changing needs of children; more positive ethos; children's behaviour more positive

Children outside more. Purchased waterproof suits so all children can go outside without depending on parents/carers to supply (cost for parents). Increased knowledge around control of infection.

Children are awesome 😊 resilience shown phenomenal. Now ask ourselves should we go inside today rather than should we go out?

10. IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU WOULD LIKE TO HIGHLIGHT ABOUT RE-OPENING DURING THE CURRENT COVID-19 PANDEMIC?

Answers to this were varied and it was not possible to quantify the responses in themes, however, the following did appear in more than one response:

Lack of clarity around guidance.	Hard keeping up with information.
Delay in guidance.	Stress and anxiety for staff.
Worried about the future.	Low numbers.
Financial sustainability.	Potential redundancies.
Issues around 'bubbles'.	Staffing issues.
Increased cleaning.	Additional paperwork.
Staffing costs.	Cleaning costs.
General increased costs.	Lack of recognition for the sector.
Appreciated support from SOSCN and (some) local authorities and headteachers/school.	Conversely, it was also highlighted there was little or no support from (some) local authorities and headteacher/schools.

Following is a selection of comments:

The lack of clarity at times was trying I'm aware this is a fast-moving situation but at times it could have been clearer. The delay in guidance for OSC was not great as it didn't give us long to prepare risk assessments etc, the guidance in places is open to interpretation which means that we risk making decisions on the way forward in an area that the Care Inspectorate may interpret differently from our service (not experienced but a possibility).

The stress and anxiety caused to the staff. The effect of the pandemic as a whole has had effect on everyone and more needs to be done to give managers support and help to support quite emotional staff. This and the rise in child anxiety we are seeing, lockdown has been great for some children reconnecting with their parents and spending time at how as a family, but now back at school and childcare they are struggling with the separation and worry of what's happening in their world.

Difficulty in keeping up with information given by the government. SOSCN did a brilliant job of passing on as much information as they could.

Just need more financial help or we won't be around much longer having been a viable business for 20 years prior to Covid.

Support from the Headteacher has been vital and necessary in order to ensure the safety of everyone.

We did poll our parents regarding opening and 72% said they were in need of childcare, once opened we have only had 42% take up places.

I feel more connected with other Clubs due to the information we are getting from SOSCN and other places. We are all in this together (as the song goes!) so it is good to know that everyone is going through the same thing and are there to help when it is required.

I fear that the longer this goes on the more obsolete Out of School Care will become.

Reopening was initially stressful, however now we are back and seeing our children happy and enjoying meeting and playing with their friends again has made all planning and preparation worthwhile.

The SOSCN has been a lifeline at keeping us up dated with information as it emerges and being a listening ear when government guidance has been confusing, contradictory and ambiguous. Thank you so much for all your support.

The children have been wonderful, adapting to the changes like little ducks to water. So proud of them all. All parents also have no complaints about not entering the Club premises etc.

Splitting children into "Bubbles" can have a negative impact on their mental health as they cannot always play with their friends.

We have noticed our numbers have reduced quite a lot due to parents still having to work from home or due to self-isolation we are hopeful that these rise again soon as our setting won't be able to sustain this for much longer.

The amount of cleaning is phenomenal, we could do with more money to employ a cleaner.

We're open throughout and can't thank you enough for the continued support guidance and regular updates helped me greatly through a stressful and challenging time.

Staffing- our cost in relation to staffing has also had to increase. Maintaining a high level of personal care has meant we have had to increase staff numbers per session and lower numbers have meant an increase to the number of sessions we deliver placing further demands on our staffing budget. Also, as numbers have slightly decreased this means less income. Our balance of income versus expenditure is a difficult balancing act.

Stressful!!!! Too many rules changes. You just get your head around one thing, then it changes again.

It is very stressful with numbers nearly -50% trying to stay positive for our children and families but not sure if we can stay open or keep our jobs.

It took some organising to meet the guidelines. Negotiations with schools, working out which areas we could use and when and sourcing PPE, resources and snacks. Extra work on risk assessments, cleaning duties and rotas. We've needed more staff to be in the different areas and had to purchase multiple resources.

Lack of communication from local council and schools. Feel like we have been left just to get on with it.

11. CONCLUDING SUMMARY

The major issues highlighted by the responses to this survey are clustered around financial viability affected by fewer numbers of places being taken up. Anxiety about the long-term future is clear. The positives relate to children and staff wellbeing, more outdoor play, teamwork and improved relationships.

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