

**Childcare Consultation**

Consultation Findings 2023

# **Overview of Consultation**

The consultation took place between 10th May – 10th June 2023.

South Ayrshire Council currently deliver 4 afterschool services and 2 holiday clubs. The services provide after school and holiday childcare for children aged 3-14 years and are registered and regulated by the Care Inspectorate. In some of our school’s breakfast/morning clubs are provided by staff in schools.

The provision of out of school childcare is a discretionary service delivered by the local authority and does not fall under the statutory obligations for service provision for children and young people.

There are a number of private and voluntary services offering a range of out of school childcare across South Ayrshire including breakfast clubs, afterschool clubs and holiday childcare.

South Ayrshire council sought the views of parents/carers to ensure that our Out of School Childcare services are available in the ways that support parents/carers and families.

**Please note** where the term regulated service is used in this report this refers to a service that is registered and inspected by the Care Inspectorate to deliver childcare.

The following information gives an overview of the findings from this consultation and a summary of comments.

350 parents/carers responded to the survey.

Of those responding 151 (43%) were currently using out of school childcare.

**1. We asked those parents/carers currently using out of school childcare what services/provision they use?  (Please tick all that apply)**

75 parents/carers indicated they use a friend/relative for term time childcare and 61 have the same arrangement during school holidays. 52 respondents stated they use a privately run (regulated) after school club during term time and 19 stated they use a local authority (regulated) after school club during term time.

45 use school run breakfast clubs during term time with 43 parents/carers making use of privately run breakfast clubs during term time.

22 respondents use local authority, regulated childcare provision during school holidays with 32 using privately run, regulated school holiday clubs.

27 parents/carers use childminders for their childcare needs.

**2.** **We asked parents/carers if their current childcare use was regular (planned and booked, where appropriate) or casual (used on an ad hoc basis when necessary).**

Most responses, 87%, stated their childcare use was planned and booked.

**3.** **We asked parents/carers to** **state the reason why their child/children currently access out of school childcare provision, term time or during school holidays?  (Please tick all that apply)**

145 respondents stated the reason they used out of school childcare was because they are working. With 23 respondents stating that they used out of school care for the activities and experiences it provided for their children.

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|  | **Because I am working** | 145 |  |
|  | **Because I am studying (college, university, other training)** | 6 |
|  | **Because I have caring responsibilities for others** | 1 |
|  | **Because my own health or circumstances mean I need respite or support with my child/children** | 1 |
|  | **For activities/experiences** | 23 |
|  | **Other (please state in next question)** | 2 |

**4. We asked parents/carers what is important to them when choosing out of school childcare provision? Respondents could tick the 3 most important to them.**

The majority, 64.8%, of respondents stated that it was important that the service operated from the school their child attended. 58.2% stated that a service being close to their work or home was also important. Less than half, 37.4%, stated that a service regulated by the Care Inspectorate was important to them when choosing out of school childcare provision.

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|  | **It is close to my home/work** | 204 |  |
|  | **The service operates from the school my child attends** | 227 |
|  | **The service is regulated by the Care Inspectorate** | 131 |
|  | **Inspection reports from the Care Inspectorate** | 37 |
|  | **Session times suit my family circumstances** | 222 |
|  | **My child(ren) has/have the opportunity to learn, play and socialise** | 180 |
|  | **Recommendation** | 29 |
|  | **Other (please state in next question** | 20 |

**5. We asked parents/carers what are the barriers, if any, for accessing out of school childcare provision?  Respondents could tick all that apply.**

48% of respondents felt out of school childcare is too expensive and therefore a barrier to accessing services. 42% stated that out of school childcare is not available in the school their child attends.

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|  | **It is too expensive** | 168 |  |
|  | **The hours are too inflexible** | 93 |
|  | **It is too far from my home** | 38 |
|  | **It is unavailable in the school my child attends** | 150 |
|  | **Not applicable** | 52 |
|  | **Other (please state in next question)** | 46 |

**6. We asked parents/carers what is/would be their preference for accessing out of school childcare provision during the term time?  Tick all that apply.**

Most, 75%, stated that their preference for accessing out of school childcare provision during term time would be a local authority run service based in the school their child currently attends. Less than half, 42%, stated that they would prefer an activity based out of school club.

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|  | **Local Authority run, based in the school your child currently attends (Regulated Service)** | 265 |  |
|  | **Privately run, based in the school your child currently attends (Regulated Service)** | 121 |
|  | **Childminder/Nanny (Regulated Service)** | 30 |
|  | **Activity based Out of School Club (breakfast/afterschool)** | 152 |
|  | **Friend/Relative** | 70 |
|  | **All are equally important** | 83 |
|  | **Other (please state in next question)** | 4 |

**7. We asked parents/carers what is/would be their preference for accessing out of school childcare provision during school holidays?  (Please tick all that apply)**

The majority, 63%, responded that they would prefer a local authority run out of school childcare service during school holidays delivered form the school their child attends. 40% stated that they would prefer an activity-based club during school holidays.

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|  | **Local Authority run service accessible locally (Regulated Service)** | 222 |  |
|  | **Privately run accessible locally (Regulated Service)** | 103 |
|  | **Childminder/Nanny (Regulated Service)** | 30 |
|  | **Activity based Out of School Club (Local Authority/sports club)** | 143 |
|  | **Friend/Relative** | 87 |
|  | **All are equally important** | 87 |
|  | **Other (please state in next question)** | 13 |

**8. We asked parents/carers what difference, if any, accessing out of school childcare during term time and/or school holidays is making to their child and/or family?  (Please tick all that apply)**

The majority, 62%, stated out of school childcare term time and/or during school holidays allows them to work train or study. 41% stated that out of school childcare reduced the need for other family members to support with childcare during term time and/or school holidays.

**9. We asked parents/carers what out of school childcare provision would they like to have available in their local community?  (Please tick all that apply)**

Most respondents, 84%, stated that they would like after school services to support later pick ups. The majority, 69%, of parents/carers stated they would like childcare during school holidays.

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|  | **Before school services to enable earlier drop offs** | 237 |  |
|  | **After school services to support families with later pick ups** | 297 |
|  | **Childcare during school holidays** | 243 |
|  | **Other (please state in next question)** | 6 |

**10. We asked parents/carers to tell us which session times would best suit their needs for childcare during school holiday periods?  (Please tick all that apply)**

53% of respondents stated that Monday – Friday 8 a.m. – 6 p.m. would best suit their needs with 34% stating Monday – Friday 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. best suited their needs.

**11. We asked parents/carers to indicate which area in South Ayrshire they would like their child to have access to out of school childcare.**

The areas with the highest demand for out of school childcare include Ayr South 27%, Prestwick 20%, Maybole/Carrick and Girvan 12%.

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|  | **Ayr North\*** | 15 |  |
|  | **Ayr South\*\*** | 97 |
|  | **Coylton** | 11 |
|  | **Girvan** | 44 |
|  | **Maybole/Carrick** | 45 |
|  | **Prestwick** | 69 |
|  | **Symington** | 29 |
|  | **Tarbolton** | 5 |
|  | **Troon** | 35 |

\* This included – Cherry Tree EYC, Wallacetown Nursery EYC, Braehead Primary School, Newton Primary School, Grammar Primary School, Kirktonholme at Owl & Pussycat Nursery and Lisa Durkin, Childminder

\*\* This included – Alloway Primary School, Doonfoot Primary School, Forehill Primary School, Kincaidston Primary School, Alphabet Yard Nursery, Busybees Nursery, Doonvale Nursery, Riverbank Nursery, Wellington School, Heads of Ayr Nursery and Rosemary Logie, Childminder

**Summary of Comments**

We offered parents/carers the opportunity to add comment on the current out of school aged childcare in South Ayrshire and also comment on future provision. A summary of the comments are as follows.

There were a number of comments throughout the consultation on the lack of available out of school childcare in Monkton following the recent closure of the privately run service.

Some parents/carers noted the positive impact of privately run breakfast clubs/afterschool care operating from the school their child currently attends, often supported by parent volunteers. Some noted that not all services operate during school holidays.

Parents/carers noted the positive impact of being able to purchase wrap around early learning and childcare for children aged 3-5 yrs.

There were a number of comments on choice and flexibility; some parents/carers would like to see more flexible options for out of school childcare including early morning and late evening drop offs and also weekend provision.

Comments were made on the limited availability in some of the out of school clubs with waiting lists in operation.

Parents/carers also noted the lack of childcare in general in more rural areas such as Barr and Tarbolton.

There were requests for more information on out of school and holiday childcare.

We will review our current provision taking into consideration the result of this consultation and comments from parents/carers.

| **You Said** | **We Do/Did** |
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| **Availability of Before and After School Provision in Certain Locations** |
| * There is no after school provision at Monkton primary following the closure of the privately run service.
* Working parents and particularly single working parents need local after school and breakfast club provision.
* Term time out of school provision should be provided in the child’s own school where possible.
* There are no childcare facilities in Barr at all.
* Girvan has little/no provision.
* There is a breakfast club at Kingcase, but universal credit won’t accept as they don’t operate enough hours to be care registered.
 | * The provision of out of school childcare is a discretionary service over and above any statutory provision for children and young people. South Ayrshire Council currently deliver after school childcare in 4 locations, Symington, Struthers, Annbank and Dundonald. The authority also operates school holiday childcare from Dundonald and Dalmilling primary schools.
* There are a number of private providers offering before and afterschool as well as holiday childcare provision across the authority.
* Where there is a need for out of school childcare the local authority are happy to work with schools and parent groups to offer advice on setting up regulated after school services.
* Some schools offer breakfast clubs and after school provision, normally for school aged children. Parents can find information on these services directly from the school.
* All our local authority after school and holiday childcare services registered with the Care Inspectorate accept childcare vouchers and tax-free childcare.
* For summer 2022 and 2023 South Ayrshire received Scottish Government funding to support delivery of summer childcare in the Girvan area. The service was delivered by the Childcare Services team and operated from Girvan EYC.
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| * There is absolutely no childcare in Wallacetown, Newton doesn't have a breakfast club
* No childcare at all in Tarbolton
* If transport was in place to high quality, high scoring Care Inspectorate regulated provision, then this would mitigate the need for it to be on our doorstep.
 | * Parents have the opportunity to purchase additional hours/session of early learning and childcare for children in local authority EYCs including Wallacetown and Newton. Details can be found here: [Purchase of additional early learning and childcare - South Ayrshire Council (south-ayrshire.gov.uk)](https://www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/article/28234/Purchase-of-additional-early-learning-and-childcare).
* In some of our schools local authority staff facilitate breakfast/morning clubs, often on a voluntary basis. In Newton Primary children have access to a breakfast club and the school operate a supper club.
* There are a few out of school clubs that are operated by parents on a voluntary basis where there is a demand, particularly for after school childcare.
* There are a number of private and voluntary services operating, mostly, out of our school premises with some services located near schools with a short walk to the venue.
* We continue to review our local authority services and have recently been awarded funding from Scottish Government to support improvements to our spaces both indoors and outdoors.
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| **Cost of Out of School Childcare** |
| * Childcare needs to be more financially available for working parents. Parents on benefits are able to access free childcare from age 2 but working families that are not eligible for benefits seem to constantly miss out.
 | * Services operated by South Ayrshire Council provide parents/carers with access to affordable childcare both term time and during school holidays.
* The Scottish Government have committed to providing children aged 2 years who meet specified eligibility criteria with access to 1140 hours of funded early learning and childcare. 23 of our Early Years Centres provide places for eligible 2-year-olds. You can find more details here [Eligible 2 year old - South Ayrshire Council (south-ayrshire.gov.uk)](https://south-ayrshire.gov.uk/article/24033/Eligible-2-year-old).
* Information on those EYCs with 2 year old provision and charges for children who do not meet the Scottish Government eligibility criteria can be found here: [Purchase of additional early learning and childcare - South Ayrshire Council (south-ayrshire.gov.uk)](https://www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/article/28234/Purchase-of-additional-early-learning-and-childcare).
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| * The use of breakfast club and after school club can cost over £200 per month, some sessions will cost £20 for two children to be in after school care for less than an hour.
* The provision is often for a few hours in the morning or afternoon.
* Expensive to have an extended day or only for people who are on low income/benefits so we can’t access either so we tend to ask family or he has to keep himself busy which isn’t ideal for us working from home or him as he gets bored.
 | * In our South Ayrshire after school services charges for the session are from 3 p.m. – 6 p.m. Charges from August 2023 are £7.87 per child per session. Our holiday childcare services are open form 8am to 6pm Parents have the option to purchase full days and half days 8am – 1pm or 1pm – 6pm.
* Please see the South Ayrshire Council web page for more information on services delivered by the local authority and charges for after school and holiday childcare. [https://www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/out-of-school-childcare](https://www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/out-of-school-childcare/)
* The charging rates, terms and conditions for privately run after school and holiday childcare is not determined by the local authority and private services will have their own operating model and pricing structures.
* There is no provision in our local authority for service prior to 8am and after 6pm or at weekends.
* Moving forward we will undertake a review of our operating model, charging structure and consult with parents on specific needs of our local authority provision.
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| **Out of School Care for Children with Additional Support Needs** |
| * Lack of options for ASN children.
* My child has complex additional support needs and requires 1 to 1. His needs have not been able to be accommodated so far.
 | * After school care and holiday childcare provided by the local authority aims to meet the needs of children accessing mainstream education. Our local authority services operate from school gym halls and activity centres and may not always be appropriate for children with significant needs. We will always work with parents, school staff and other professionals involved to provide appropriate childcare.
* Our schools with specialist provision offer some opportunities for childcare before and after school and during Easter and Summer school holidays. The schools work collaboratively with providers such as Aberlour and link with Social Work.
* Parents can contact the school directly for more information.
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| **Provision for Children S1-S3** |
| * Secondary schools should also provide after-school and breakfast clubs for S1-S3 pupils as they are too young to be left at home alone.
 | * Our local authority Out of School Childcare services are registered to provide after school and school holiday childcare for children aged 3 years – 14 years. Currently these services operate in Annbank Primary, Struthers Primary (for Muirhead and Struthers), Dundonald Activity Centre and Symington Community Centre.
* Local authority school holiday clubs operate from Dundonald Activity Centre and Dalmilling Primary school. For more information please visit our web page here: [Out of school and holiday childcare - South Ayrshire Council (south-ayrshire.gov.uk)](https://www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/out-of-school-childcare/).
* Some of our secondary schools operate breakfast clubs. There are also variety of after school and holiday activity clubs provided for children of secondary age free of charge. Please contact your school directly for information and timetables.
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| **Flexibility and Choice** |
| * I would use 0830 – 1730 with the ability to book half days, I have to pay for a full day even if I don’t need it.
* Nothing is designed to be a working parent. After school club is only open until 5.45pm, I get charged extra if I’m late.
* We need to book a month in advance which isn’t always ideal.
* Weekends – 8.00am – 4.00pm
* 7.00am till 5.00pm
* 6.00am – 8.00pm
* 0700 hours to 1930 hours
 | * Local authority after school services operate 3 p.m. - 6 p.m.
* Local authority holiday childcare services are open from 8am to 6pm. In our local authority services parents have the option to purchase full days and half days 8am – 1pm or 1pm – 6 pm.
* Privately operated childcare services will have their own operating model and pricing structures. Please contact your school for information.
* In our local authority services, we have moved to an online booking process where parents are required to pay for the service prior to the start of the block. This brings the service in line with other services across the council. It allows us to plan provision as well as staffing and keep on top of any spaces available for those on the waiting list. You can find information on charges, blocks available to book and payment deadlines here: [Out of school and holiday childcare - South Ayrshire Council (south-ayrshire.gov.uk)](https://www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/out-of-school-childcare/)
* There is no provision in our local authority for services prior to 8am and after 6pm or at weekends.
 |

| **You Said** | **We Do/Did** |
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| **Staffing and Capacity** |
| * There is a waiting list for most days which means it is difficult to secure a place with the after-school care club.
* Places are limited and are unavailable as capped for staffing. At Alloway School the facility can only accommodate small numbers.
* Out of school childcare is only available in the mornings in Monkton. The provider that ran services was unable to recruit staff to run the sessions – so staff recruitment and retention is the main barrier to accessing effective out of school childcare.
* Unable to get booked in.
* Priority is given to people already using the service so no new people can get it.
* Symington is so much bigger now and no additional places have been made available.
* Only one summer club runs in the area that accepts childcare vouchers and it’s sometimes fully booked.
 | * All our local authority after school and holiday childcare services are registered and regulated by the Care Inspectorate. The services work to the required adult:child ratios and have a set capacity, according to available space, as part of their registration with the Care inspectorate. The same regulations apply to privately run regulated services.
* Staff employed in the service need to meet the requirements to be registered with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC). South Ayrshire Council continues to face significant challenges recruiting suitably qualified staff and we are aware that the private sector are also facing similar challenges.
* For August 2023 the local authority afterschool service at Symington relocated from the Community Hall to the primary school gym hall. This reduced the need for a walking bus and offers children a service in their school environment. We will continue to work with the Care Inspectorate to review the service and ratios.
* We know a couple of the local authority after-school clubs are at maximum capacity and are operating waiting lists. There are some spaces available at Symington for session 2023-24 and parents can contact Childcare Services to check availability. Please e mail childcareservices@south-ayrshire.gov.uk or call the team on 01292 612029.
* All our local authority out f school services accept childcare vouchers.
* In our local authority services we are keen to support continuity in childcare for parents and families. There is often movement and places are released to the waiting list as childcare needs change.
* We will continue to review our services and capacity moving forward working collaboratively with the Care Inspectorate.
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| **Information** |
| * Not enough information given out.
 | * Information on South Ayrshire Council operated after school and holiday childcare services can be found here: [Out of school and holiday childcare - South Ayrshire Council (south-ayrshire.gov.uk)](https://www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/out-of-school-childcare/).
* Parents can also find information on our Twitter/X page, @SACChildcare, and our Facebook, South Ayrshire Council Childcare Services.
* For information about what is available for your child please contact your school directly.
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