



LASC Childcare Services Ltd  
Annual Report 2022 – 2023



Registered Scottish Charity No:  
SCO 24467

Company Limited by Guarantee  
No:197859

## **Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)**

Coming out of covid 19 we seen a lot of changes in behaviour of children and their reactions to certain things. How they cope in new situations, forming of friendships, challenging behaviour, triggers to behaviour and much more.

It is fact that across the world not all children may have had a positive experience at home during lockdown and not every child may have had a positive home life from birth and these experiences are having lasting effects on us and shape us into the individuals we are today.

All staff at LASC Childcare Services are trained on ACEs as it is important for staff to understand why a child may behave the way they do and how they can positively support this behaviour. This is also included in training for staff undertaking a qualification through Edinburgh College as it is accepted that it is a significant part of child development. It is great that we share the same vision when training our up-and-coming Practitioner as well as current practitioners.

With all this we felt as it had been a focus within our service this past 12 months, we should also make it our focus to share with you as service users to give you more of an understanding too.

### **Adverse Childhood Experiences & Trauma**

Psychological trauma, including adverse and traumatic experiences in childhood and adulthood, is more common than is often assumed. Many people will recover without the need for professional therapy or treatment, but if those affected are not supported, it can have a range of negative consequences.

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are stressful events occurring in childhood including.

- *domestic violence*
- *parental abandonment through separation or divorce*
- *a parent with a mental health condition*
- *being the victim of abuse (physical, sexual and/or emotional)*
- *being the victim of neglect (physical and emotional)*
- *a member of the household being in prison*
- *growing up in a household in which there are adults experiencing alcohol and drug use problems.*

The Scottish Government are creating a focus on working partnerships with a wide range of sectors and services to help reduce the incidence and impact of all types of childhood adversity and trauma, focusing on:

- *support for children, parents, and families to prevent ACEs and trauma.*
- *mitigating ACEs and trauma for children and young people*
- *developing trauma-informed workforce and services*

- *raising societal awareness about ACEs and trauma, and supporting local actions across communities*

### **Individual experience of adversity and trauma**

ACEs and trauma can have a significant negative impact on people’s lives. However, such experiences should not be seen as placing limits on someone’s aspirations and achievements. Individuals’ experience of and response to adversity and trauma depends on a range of factors, including the existence of supportive relationships, positive community experiences, access to financial resources and other forms of support. It’s therefore not possible to determine an individual’s longer-term outcomes (like their health or education) based on the number of ACEs they have experienced.

This is why we do not support ‘scoring’ the number of ACEs an individual has within healthcare, education or other settings. However, by increasing our understanding of ACEs at a population level through surveys, we can gauge how prevalent ACEs are across society. Further research also contributes to our understanding of how this impacts health, the criminal justice system and other services and outcomes.

### **ACEs and health inequalities**

Preventing ACEs should be seen within the wider context of tackling societal inequalities. While ACEs are found across the population, there is more risk of experiencing ACEs in areas of higher deprivation.

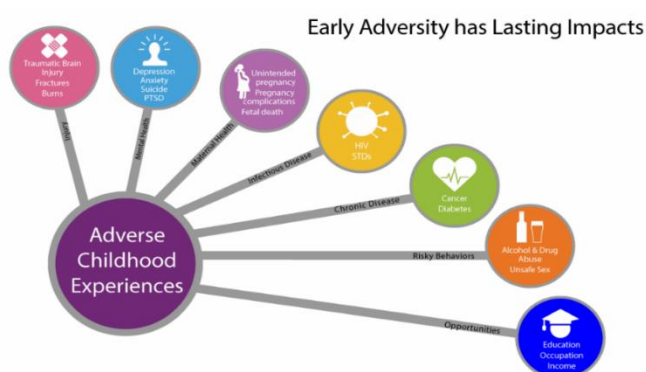
ACEs have been found to have lifelong impacts on health and behaviour and they are relevant to all sectors and involve all of us in society. We all have a part to play in preventing adversity and raising awareness of ACEs. Resilient communities have an important role in action on ACEs.

An ACE survey with adults found that compared to people with no ACEs, those with 4 or more ACEs are more likely to:

- *have been in prison.*
- *develop heart disease.*
- *frequently visit the GP*
- *develop type 2 diabetes.*
- *have committed violence in the last 12 months.*
- *have health-harming behaviours (high-risk drinking, smoking, drug use).*

When children are exposed to adverse and stressful experiences, it can have a long-lasting impact on their ability to think, interact with others and on their learning.

ACEs should not be seen as someone’s destiny. There is much that can be done to offer hope and build resilience in children, young people and adults who have experienced adversity in early life.



## **Chair Report**

It never ceases to amaze me how as a small charity, we continue to adapt to the ever-changing landscape around us and to continue to grow as an organisation. As detailed in our CEO report below, LASC continues to grow and demand for increase in services continues. There have been several challenges in continuing to meet the Care Inspectorate standards for Out of School care due to both additional requirements in the standards themselves as well as bringing services back to previous capacity in the 'post covid' recovery period. However, with a dedicated staff team and excellent leadership, we have achieved all required standards and exceeded in several areas.

We held a successful Board development day in March 2023, taking the opportunity to review ourselves against standards set out by the Office of the Scottish charity regulator (OSCR) 'Guidance and good practice for charity trustees.

The standards state that an effective board will provide good governance and leadership by:

- 1. Understanding their role**
- 2. Ensuring delivery of organisational purpose**
- 3. Working effectively both as individuals and a team**
- 4. Exercising effective control**
- 5. Behaving with Integrity**
- 6. Being open and accountable**

Using this framework allowed us to develop a prioritised improvement plan and follow up with an evaluation of Board effectiveness, a skills audit of members and updating of our register of interests for Board members. We will continue this work during 2023/24 to ensure that our Board remains fit for purpose to meet the needs of LASC now and in the future.

As always, a huge thank you to all our experienced and skilled Board members who regularly give up their time to make such a valuable contribution to the work of LASC through attending regular Board meetings, subcommittees and carry out specific pieces of work when required.

And of course, a big thank you to our amazing staff team who deliver a great service and constantly adapt to the ever-changing circumstances they find themselves in.

**Sue Gibbs**

**Chairperson**

## CEO Report

This has been a very busy and somewhat challenging year at LASC recovering from the impact of covid over the previous years on all our services. We are now delighted to see an increase in the numbers of children attending our services. It is hard to believe that LASC celebrated 28 years serving our communities in Loanhead, Roslin, Rosewell and Bilston. As an organisation, we have a great deal to be proud of over the years with a range of accolades bestowed on our organisation. Here are a few examples **The International Play Association, Right to Play Award 2008**. This award recognised the achievements of Loanhead Community Garden at the Loanhead Community Learning Centre in promoting children's right to play. **SaBRE (Supporting Britain's Reservists & Employers) Certificate of Support** National recognition of acknowledgement of **Loanhead Out of School Care Projects** commitment to support the Reserves of the Armed Forces : **I celebrated by the National Lottery as a Change Maker of Scotland**. This recognition highlighted individuals who were using National Lottery funding to make a difference to people and communities in which they live.: **awarded an Organisational Support Award by the Midlothian Volunteer Centre**. This award recognised Irene's contribution to voluntary organisations and her commitment as a volunteer. : **I Won Scottish Businesswoman of the Year Outstanding Contribution to Business Award from the Association of Scottish Businesswomen**. I was the first social entrepreneur to win this award. **Herald Society Awards** : being one of three shortlisted for **Worker of the Year**. **Scottish Urban Regeneration Awards** : Loanhead Community Learning Centre/The Kabin one of three shortlisted projects for award for **Community-Led Regeneration**. **Scottish NMT Nursery Awarded Operations/Regional Scottish Director winner**. We are well deservedly recognised as a unique award-winning quality childcare service and held up as an example of good practice throughout the sector as well as our ongoing fantastic community work at the Link in Loanhead and our now established Charity Shop in Portobello.

We have a highly trained, professional team who work with the children and young adults. All our personnel are continually updating their skills base through their Continuous Professional Development programme and have all recently completed or are working towards an SVQ, some up to degree level in child or adult social care. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the exceptional teamwork from all staff over this year and the amazing support and dedication from the Senior Management team and our Board of Directors. I want to thank each and every one of you.

Our achievements and key issues over the past year include:

### **Achievements**

- An increase in numbers attending all settings
- All staff being paid the Real Living Wage
- **Charity shop** is going well with a great website and celebrated its first anniversary in October 2022
- **LASC website** revamped to be more inviting and user friendly
- A group of parents in the community secured funding to widen the path to allow wheelchair access at **Rosewell nursery**– great community partnership
- **Rosewell** community asset transfer (CAT) application to extend nursery and community use submitted
- **Roslin Village Group** – working well in partnership for Roslin CAT application
- Two new members recruited to Board- invaluable third sector and funding experience
- **Big Lottery** uplift of 5% to support the Link
- New 6ft fence around **Link** premises to improve children’s safety.
- **Finance subcommittee** of the Board established.
- Staff Development Day and Board Development Day both productive
- Replacement of a lot of resources including **play equipment and art resources**
- Shared learning Rosewell Community Nursery/ Loanhead Community Nursery and **Woodland Adventure**
- Excellent partnership with **Social Work** to prioritise care for ASN children and assist with staffing.
- Successful partnership again with **Art Link** for our Summer Holiday Club with funding support from Midlothian Council

### **Challenges**

- Extensive waiting lists at **Rosewell Community Nursery** and **Roslin afterschool club** with both at capacity for most sessions. All other clubs have waiting lists for some sessions, but capacity is limited due to recruitment challenges to allow us to meet demand for additional places.
- Children with additional support needs (ASN) and young adult service (YAS) service also have lengthy waiting lists, staffing continues to be a challenge with recruitment, retention and absence through illness and we are looking at ways to address this including different incentives.
- **Care inspectorate** Inspection of Link facility after covid was disappointing – but the team worked hard and pulled together, with help from a consultant from Bonnyrigg After School Club to achieve scores of 4s at the follow up inspection.

**Irene Hogg**  
**CEO**

## **Treasurers Report 22/2023**

Although we faced ups and downs, overall, it has been a more stable year financially. Most building repairs and outstanding remedial works were completed. There was a significant drop to housekeeping costs as Government rulings changed around PPE. Although we were unsuccessful on a couple of funding applications, due to much more limited funding now available because of covid as well as competition from many third sector organisations. We did receive a grant from The Governments Childcare Omicron Impact fund.

We were also able to fulfil our obligation to meet the Scottish Living Wage.

The biggest impact on finances has been the huge increases in utilities and running costs. With the uncertainty ahead we are looking at energy saving grants available which if successful will reduce costs and see us become more energy efficient.

Inevitably, we have had to implement fee increases to cover soaring running costs, however we have endeavoured to keep the increases to a minimum.

## **Debs Stout**

## **Office Report**

The admin team have had another busy year. We implemented the Family system, doing our best to ensure that all families were signed up to the system and aware that important information will be shared on the Family Newsfeed. The system allows for much better communication with parents and carers and is particularly useful for the nurturing of the partnership between home and nursery/ out of school care. The financial side of the system isn't as user friendly as we would like, but we are always here to provide further information and to look at any potential issues for families.

We continue to work hard to support our staff team, and the families using our service, providing information regarding funding etc. and doing our best to make them aware of any services which may provide additional support or be of benefit to them (including providing information regarding the Government Tax Free Childcare Scheme) which is used widely by an ever-increasing number of families. With a constantly expanding staff team we provide as much practical assistance as possible with IT setup/ payroll/ and Iris HR system to allow the Operations Managers to focus on other training/ inductions.

**Helen Evans**  
**Office Manager**

## **Human Resources Report**

Firstly, I would like to complement our teams on their tenacity, dedication, and integrity towards their roles. They were wonderful ambassadors to LASC and all we stand for.

It was only natural that the government review on the management of covid had an impact on our team and how we managed the processes to keep our people, children, and families safe. It took its toll on some of our team, which resulted in absences and thus stretched our remaining teams. At no point during this period was there any evidence of a failing in the care provision.

Our people worked together to implement a plan to improve services post covid. This included restructuring existing teams, identifying skill gaps, developing training plans and applying all the actions to develop a stronger and better care package.

Absence continues to affect LASC's ability to run to capacity and new approaches are regularly applied to help manage the impact of this and to support our staff. With there being a trend across the UK of job hopping, our focus continues to work on retention and longevity to create stability across the teams. An aspect of this approach has been LASC continuing to be recognised as a real living wage employer.

**Lynda Stoddart**  
**HR Consultant**

## **Community Services Report**

It's been a busy year for The Link team. We have many wonderful regular customers and thank them for supporting us. We are grateful to every one of our groups who hold their classes within the building enabling our community to come together.

We held numerous events over the last year including two Teddy Bear's Picnic events, Breakfast with Santa as well as lots of themed craft events.

## **Community Garden**

There has been new fencing erected on the outside of the building adding more security to make it safe for everyone. Our community garden is flourishing, and there have been many visiting groups including local school children. We continue to have a good working relationship with Growing Families and thank them for their support with our Community Garden.

Overall, it's been a great year, but it's not been without its challenges. The rising cost of utilities towards the end of 2022 as well as increased produce costs has put a strain on finances however, we are committed to reviewing and improving cost effectiveness of our overheads to maintain this excellent community facility. Going forward, we will look at ways of reducing our energy bills in the form of energy saving grants. For example, upgrading our lights to LEDs which would cut our costs and make us more energy efficient. We are also exploring grants to transform an



underutilised room within the building into a multi-use Sensory Room which can be used by our resident After school club and Saturday club children.

### **Charity Shop – Portobello**

Coming up for their 1st year anniversary, we are very grateful to the community for the donations received throughout the year. The Charity Shop staff have worked hard to maintain volunteers and source unique pieces to sell within the shop attracting a wider customer base.

Like all shops and businesses there have been increases in utilities and overheads however, with forecast of charges plateauing, we will continue to invest any profits made into upgrading and buying new equipment for our ASN children and Young Adult services.

Find out more information about the Charity shop at [www.livecaregive.org](http://www.livecaregive.org)

**Debs Stout**  
**Link Manager**

### **Out of School Care Services**

Our numbers have continued to increase and several of our settings have been at capacity either in terms of numbers for our Care Inspectorate Registration or our staffing levels. We have had difficulties in recruiting qualified staff, as have many other employers in the Care Sector, and this continues to be our focus. The children have enjoyed a range of activities, both indoor and outdoor, throughout the year.

### **Paradykes**

Breakfast club children have created a variety of displays for topics they have been interested in this year – including flags during the World Cup and Inventors. The number of children attending has been low twenties Tuesday to Thursday with Mondays and Fridays being quieter.

Afterschool club has been busy, with numbers ranging from mid to high twenties Monday to Thursday. Fridays are much busier as we also have many children with additional support needs (ASN) who attend. Our reputation as an ASN provider, and the lack of other providers in Midlothian, has led to us having an ever-growing waiting list for this care.

The children have enjoyed a variety of activities at The Link with outdoors being most popular. Children having access the park and MUGA for team games. When at the park the children have enjoyed playing games like 'among us' and trying to work out who the imposter is. Indoors, the children enjoyed the soft play and part of the way through the year we changed how we set up and moved to having two playrooms with the children enjoying the variety of play spaces being set up.

We had a Care Inspectorate inspection in 2022 with a follow up in January 2023. The staff team have worked hard to ensure that the quality of care provided is at the standard expected by LASC and our families.

**Care inspectorate:** [InspectionReport-315389.pdf](#) – 5<sup>th</sup> May 2023

## **Ramsay**

Ramsay has been quieter, with breakfast club ranging from 10 – 20 throughout the week and afterschool club slightly higher. Friday afterschool club has been very quiet and due to staffing, we have been bringing the children to the LINK every Friday afternoon. Most of the children have enjoyed this experience.

During our time at Ramsay this year again the children have enjoyed the outdoors having access to the MUGA for football, gymnastics and team games. There have also been regular visits to the 'Big Playground' where the children enjoy the equipment like climbing frame and playing on their bikes and scooters.

Indoors, the children enjoyed plenty of arts and crafts especially slime making which is always a popular activity. As well as the usual board games, Lego and house corner we have access to the gym hall. When at the gym hall the children enjoy getting out the various pieces of equipment to make dens, have gymnastic shows and play basketball.

## **Bilston**

We reopened our ASC service in April 2022, due to growing demand. The service at Bilston has been getting busier throughout the year with a small waiting list, due to the numbers being capped to the current staffing levels. We hope to be able to recruit more staff to allow us to provide care to more local families.

We have been over the year working on how to best set up the play spaces to make them inviting in the room we use. The children enjoy making and creating wonderful things most of all hamma bead designs. As well as our room have access to the dining hall which has meant we can have dance lessons with the staff and team games when it has been very wet outside.

When outside the children enjoy playing at the park but mostly enjoy going round to the woodland area. Round at the woods the children can climb trees and make dens with any materials they find. The children enjoy working together to make dens helping one another out.

## **Roslin**

Roslin continues to be our busiest afterschool club with a lengthy waiting list. Monday to Thursday afterschool club is at capacity, with Friday afterschool club and all breakfast club sessions capped due to staffing levels. Breakfast club numbers range from 15 -25 Monday to Thursday with Friday around 10. Monday to Thursday we have 40 – 50 children attending afterschool club with mid-twenties on Friday afternoons.

Being the busiest club means lots of activities happening and plenty people to make new friends with. Roslin enjoy the variety of spaces set up over the two rooms varying from loose parts to use their imaginations to create something to letting off

some excess energy on the bouncy castle. Children enjoy creating works of arts and then these being displayed for parents to see.

Outdoors the children again enjoy loose part play with drainpipes, old bread baskets and various other materials. Making dens, water ways and castles to defend from the enemy. As well the children enjoy using the bikes and scooters, climbing trees, football, and a play at the park.

### **Rosewell**

The numbers of children attending Rosewell have grown, with a waiting list developing, particularly for younger siblings of children who currently attend. We have 15 – 25 children attending breakfast club throughout the week with after school club Monday to Thursday ranging from 30 – 40 children. Friday afterschool club is currently capped at 16 children due to staffing.

At Rosewell we have continued with the variety of play spaces that means there is lots of fun and laughter to be heard. The children enjoy the creative staff at Rosewell to make wonder things from materials and even have a go at sewing at times too. The children enjoy performing with music and talent shows a regular at Rosewell pavilion.

Outdoors the children enjoy playing on the hill with tyres, team games at the bottom and on occasions making a tyre swing with the trees at the bottom of the hill.

Outdoors, the children enjoy taking out the soft play pieces to make dens with each other.

### **Saturday Service**

We have a growing waiting list for our Saturday Service as families in Midlothian and further afield are applying to use this service. Current staffing levels mean that we cannot accommodate any more children at present.

Saturdays have always been days where the children can access a variety of trips out and about locally. This year we have seen the child regularly go to Ryze the trampoline centre which has been very successful. Alongside this the children also enjoy swimming at the local pools, going local walks as well as going to other places like Vogrie, the beach, and Saughton park.

Children enjoy having time to build on existing friendships but also create new friends with both other children and the staff. Children enjoy using the soft play to relax, baking cakes and other sensory activities.

### **Holiday Club**

Our holiday clubs continue to be very popular, providing care for children out with our 'school' catchment area in addition to children who also attend term time. Everyone comes together, with children meeting new friends and reconnecting with old friends too.

With our base at the Link and the use of Roslin Pavilion, the children have experienced a range of activities and trips. The children are actively involved in

planning the holiday club programmes, and Art Link have enhanced the summer programme for all our children.

Again this year our holiday programmes have been hugely successful with activities over the years becoming firm favourites. If there is a chalk chase then you will see most of the children out of the building following the chalk marks to hunt down where the other team are hiding.

With the diverse range of activities provided during our summer programme it is great to work alongside some other professionals who provide some excellent workshops. From dance to magic, the children have enjoyed these workshops and are something a bit different from things our staff can provide.

Having successful trips both half and full day is also a big thing during the holidays from various beaches to parks both near and far.

## **YAS**

We had a successful inspection from Midlothian Council Social care team, and they felt we were meeting the needs of all service users.

The young adult service has grown in capacity over the past year, and we now have up to 10 adults in mid-week and this remains above 8 over the weekend.

We have supported two families with weekend and overnight respite successfully. We also opened the service for 4 days over the Christmas period to provide the much-needed respite for families over the 2-week closure. Staff were happy to do so.

A new 3-week activity planner has been introduced allowing the young adults to do their favourite activities as a group as well as introducing more adult led activities such as golf and bowling.

Shelley and Alan went out and visited 3 separate adult day care services to look at what they are providing their service users, how their policies and procedures differ from our children's service and to look at their environments to inspire our environment for the young adults.

4 staff are undergoing their SVQ 3 in Health & Social Care and 1 member of staff undergoing their SVQ 4 in Management for Health & Social Care.

## **Community Nurseries**

### **Rosewell Community Nursery**

**Unannounced Care Inspection on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2022:** CS2013322032 [Find care \(careinspectorate.com\)](https://www.careinspectorate.com)

Rosewell has remained full this past year and our waiting list is continuing to grow. We doubled our numbers within the 3-5 room with more than 85% of our families choosing to stay with us to use their 1140 hours funding which was great.

The nursery manager and the team created an Improvement plan with the following 3 priorities:

**1. *Developing a quality outdoor learning environment for all ages of children.***

We have created an outdoor classroom, water wall and planters for the children to enjoy and will continue to develop.

This is going well with water walls, planters, outdoor classroom and will continue to be developed over the forthcoming year.

***Developing the Staff skills and knowledge to support planning and observations.***

As parents, we know you love the snapshots and little stories of your child's day. As practitioners, the staff use your child's journey to really capture that learning throughout their experiences and we have worked all year providing the team with both in house and external training for this. Parents have feedback that this has made a real difference in the quality observations you are receiving from your little one's time at nursery.

**2. *Enhancing children's experiences during mealtime***

This has been a massive success, the lunchroom has been transformed into a warm and inviting space with menu cards, tablecloths, and flowers for the children to experience. We have developed our menu with the support from parents during our opening evening and this is both being enjoyed by the children and complimented by Midlothian Council. The Pre School-Children are self-serving their own breakfast, snacks, and lunch confidently in preparation for school.

**Loanhead Community Nursery**

**Unannounced Care Inspection on 14<sup>th</sup> June 2022 – CS2003013328 [Find care \(careinspectorate.com\)](https://www.careinspectorate.com)**

Loanhead has continued to grow in capacity over the past 12 months and now has a waiting list for the under 3-year-olds. We found our numbers in the 3-5 room much quieter this year than unusual, but we feel this is the effect of the Local authority nurseries around us increasing their capacities.

The nursery manager and her team created an improvement plan for the year with the following priorities:

**1. *Developing Quality Planning and Observations***

As in the Roswell nursery, as parents we know you love the snapshots and little stories of your child's day as practitioners, the staff use your child's journey to really capture that learning throughout their experiences and we have worked all year

providing the team with both in house and external training for this. This has made a real difference in the quality observations you are receiving from the staff and this is being shown through Management quality assurance checks and feedback form parents. The staff have been working hard on their Long-Term plan ensuring they are capturing all the celebrations and events throughout the year and developing the work they do with their floor books for the children to be involved in their own planning.

## ***2. Develop the Outdoor Environment***

The garden has been transformed into an outdoor learning environment, mirroring the experiences the children have on offer indoors. All 3 rooms have worked hard to develop the garden to meet all 3 age groups, adding in features such as water walls, outdoor classrooms, climbing frames, slides and a whole lot of loose parts.

## ***3. Developing and embedding high quality routines within the nursery***

This in an area in which we are still working on. We have successfully created a warm, welcoming mealtime experience for the children and just recently had an inspection from Midlothian Council Early year's team, who have asked if they can send practitioners from other settings to observe our mealtimes as we are getting it right for all children. However, we are still working on the sleep routine for the children and ensuring we are getting it right for not only the babies but the toddlers in the setting who need to sleep or have a rest too.

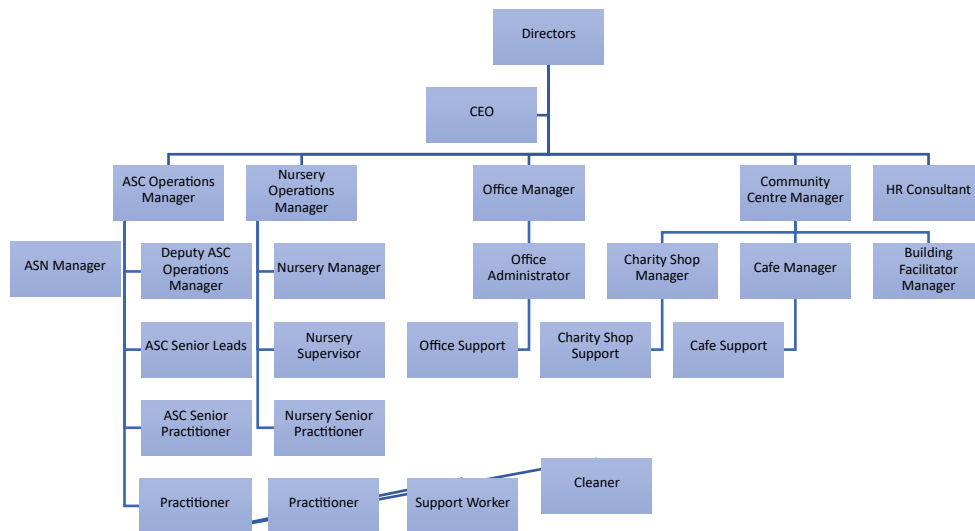
### **Other Achievements within the settings were:**

- ✓ Woodland Adventures increased to two days per week due to the success in this.
- ✓ Shared Learning between both settings with weekly library visits
- ✓ Successful parents' evenings
- ✓ Sports Day, Graduation, Charity fundraising and many more activities welcoming the parents back into our settings.

## Who's who in LASC?

### Organisation Chart

#### Staffing structure



### Our Board of Directors 2022/ 2023

Ms Sue Gibbs	Chair	Local resident previous service user
Mrs Nikki Lovie-Lewis	Treasurer	Local resident and service user
Mrs Kerry Mackay	Vice Chair	Local resident previous service user
Mrs Rhona West		Local resident previous service user
Mrs Catriona Anderson		Local resident and service user
Mrs Tracey McCarter		Local resident previous service user
Mrs Janey Hoeflich		Local resident previous service user
Ms Adele Black		Local resident and service user
Mrs I Hogg	Company Secretary	LASC CEO Local resident