

# Care in Scotland it's life changing work

Karen Chatterton,  
Depute Manager of a nursery

"I'm thrilled to be part of the ongoing development of Little Steps Child Care and I'm excited to see what the future might bring."

Karen has worked in child care for 10 years, since leaving school. Read more about her role as Depute Manager at Little Steps Child Care.

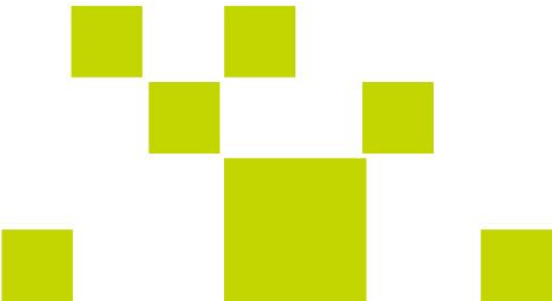
**What type of service do you work in?**

Providing child care to working parents. Little Steps Childcare offers a range of services including breakfast club, morning care, out of school club for primary school children and a pick-up and drop-off service for schools.

Children range in ages from babies to primary school. On average, we can have around 45 children attending the morning session and 55 at the out of school club.

**Have you always worked in social services?**

Yes, I have worked in child care since leaving school, about ten years ago.





**Can you tell us more about your job?**

As Deputy Manager, my main role is to oversee the day-to-day running of the nursery.

Tasks include compiling rotas, registers and waiting lists, overseeing the three different age-group rooms (0-2, 2-3 and 3-5 year olds), supporting staff, covering shifts, and facilitating pick-ups and drop-offs.

Communicating with parents is also key. This can consist of regular face to face meetings or responding to emails and requests.

All our children have their own individual care plans and some may require extra support, for example, behavioural or learning.

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**What are you working on at the moment?**

We are in the process of introducing room audits which will lead to 'Room of the Month' and 'Staff Member of the Month' awards.

These awards, which are currently being developed by team members, should allow us to identify areas that need more attention, while incentivising exemplary work.

We're also planning a calendar of events, from our open day to the highly anticipated graduation in the summer.

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**Who else is in your team?**

Little Steps Childcare has a nursery owner and a manager. Both myself and Kristy job share the role of Deputy Manager, working directly with three Room Seniors. Seven other staff members make up the full team.

We also have an Early Years Practitioner who manages the out of school club and a parent who kindly provides hot lunches for the children.

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**What qualifications do you need for this job?**

I have my Personal Development Award in Child Care which I completed over an 18 month period.

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**What part of your job motivates you and why?**

No two days are the same. Being Deputy Manager generally takes you away from being with the children full time. This only means that when you do get the time in the rooms, it's appreciated and enjoyed all the more.

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**What are the challenges, good and not so good that you face in your job?**

Every day is different. When you walk into work, you have no idea what the day will bring. Being a small business, sometimes small things can have a big impact. One day, my manager was away and four members of staff called in sick! It certainly teaches you to think on your toes.

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**In what way is your career in social services rewarding?**

Being able to make a positive impact on young people's lives while also supporting parents as their children grow and develop.

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**Can you explain the skills and qualities you think are needed to do the role you're doing?**

Certainly patience but also having a warm aura about you is important. You want children to feel secure in your presence.

You also need to be a team player. All our team members have quite different qualities; one of the girls is really into her craft and art, while others are outdoorsy. Another is never off Pinterest, so regularly comes into work with new, fun and quirky ideas. These all add to the development of our service and, in turn, the learning experience the children receive at Little Steps Child Care.

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**What training and development opportunities have you undertaken whilst in your current job?**

My training is ongoing. Three core areas that everyone has to regularly update are child protection, food hygiene and first aid. Any additional training is a real bonus. We certainly always ensure that we work collaboratively and share best practise.

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**How do you see your career progressing?**

As a working mum, I'm very happy in my current role. I'm thrilled to be part of the ongoing development of Little Steps Child Care and I'm excited to see what the future might bring.

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**What would you say to someone thinking about a career in social services?**

Although the role can bring a lot of positives, in comparison to council nurseries it's not the best paid job. It is, however, on a par with other privately run child care services.

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## **Is a career in care the career for you?**

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