

Stepping Stones Nursery

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To Whom It May Concern

5 July 2024

Dear Sirs

Points for Consideration

Stepping Stones Nursery has been established for 25 years this year. We are a very well-run Nursery with a very good name in the local community. We have recently expanded the Nursery and are now registered for 100 children per day. We are a large part of childcare for the local community and allow many parents to return to work following maternity leave etc.

The points we would like to be considered are: -

- In the current cost of living crisis, it is very difficult to increase parents' costs in line with the recent minimum wage increase and this has added significant pressures on Nurseries.
- The Childcare Offer for Wales current rate of £5 per hour is now insufficient to cover costs.
- When the Childcare Offer for Wales rate is set, this is set for a number of years and does not increase in line with inflation during the period.
- We fear that if Wales follows England and introduces the Childcare Offer for Wales to younger ages groups, long standing Nurseries maybe forced to close, as seen in England, as it will not be possible to run at a loss.
- As children in Wales and the Valleys are more often or not offered full time school places at the age of 3, we do not benefit from the increased ratio of 1:8 for the age group and only have a small proportion of children in this age category. We feel that in England, Nurseries benefit from this age group on a larger scale as children go to school older over the border. If England Nurseries are not financially surviving with the equivalent of the Childcare Offer for Wales scheme being made available to younger children, where they do have a larger benefit from the 1:8 ratio, then Nurseries in Wales will be even more effected by this.

- In England, the staff to child ratio for children aged 2 to 3 years is 1:5. Whereas in Wales this is 1:4. Are there any plans for this to be reviewed and brought in line with our other nations?
- Again, if Nurseries in England are closing because they financially cannot make the Childcare Offer for Wales equivalent scheme work because the hourly rate is too low, this would have an even bigger impact in Wales as the ratio is lower.

We are sure there are many other points to be considered and this letter has only quickly been put together.

Thank you for your support.

With kind regards

Taryn

Taryn James
Director
Stepping Stones Nursery