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Flying Start – The Tendering Process.

The owner of Osbourne Lodge Nursery, Nikola Masters attended a fact finding meeting held by Torfaen County Borough Council to discover more about the expansion of Flying Start in the area. She has already successfully tendered to provide Early Education in the past year and wanted to find out more about Torfaen's plans for expanding Flying Start in line with the Welsh Governments plans.

After Nikola attended the information evening and discussed the expansion with their childcare team, she realised she was already meeting many of the requirements of Flying Start. Although the nursery will be required to carry out an ITERS (Infant/Toddler Environmental Rating Scale) assessment to ensure quality as part of the Flying Start Programme. Nikola said she will find this useful to highlight areas of improvement as well as reinforcing the good practice that already existed. Once she had decided to tender Nikola found the process relatively straightforward but admitted it was time consuming. However, having already gone through the process she was prepared for what was entailed. After registering with Sell2Wales she was able to create a Proactis account and go through the tender stage by stage. She answered a series of questions and needed to upload the setting's policy documents, accounts and supporting evidence to the site. The whole process was completed online, and a certain amount of computer literacy was required. However, Torfaen offered a lot of support in this respect. Once submitted her tender was sent to the Local Authority for approval, she can then be added to the list of providers offering Flying Start that parents can choose from.

At the start of the process Nikola had been a little skeptical, afraid that offering Flying Start places would involve considerably more paperwork for very low funding rates and increased stress for herself and her staff. However, it was the needs of parents and families in her community that finally persuaded her to take part. Eligible parents would be able to access up to 12.5 hours of free high-quality childcare a week, making childcare a little more affordable for parents. There was also a concern that the settings business model only offers 5- or 10-hour sessions so families would have to fund the other 2.5 hours. Nikola said "I see it as future proofing. We have a lot of 2 year olds at the moment but we don't know what might happen in two years and the flying start sessions may support sustainability."

Nikola recognised that while providing Flying Start will place additional burdens on her and her staff especially regarding paperwork and submitting registers, there will be advantages such as access to training, ITERS rating and support from the Local Authority. Nikola is happy to be involved with the expansion of Flying Start at this early stage in the Welsh Governments plans to provide funded childcare places to all 2 year



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olds, however, is important and forms a part of her future plans, especially if it can fit in with her current business model.

Dechrau'n Deg - Y Broses Dendro.

Mynychodd perchennog Meithrinfa Osbourne Lodge, Nikola Masters, gyfarfod canfod ffeithiau a gynhaliwyd gan Gyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Torfaen i ddarganfod mwy am ehangiad Dechrau'n Deg yn yr ardal. Mae hi'n barod wedi tendro'n llwyddiannus i ddarparu Addysg Gynnar yn ystod y flwyddyn ddiwethaf ac roedd eisiau darganfod mwy am gynlluniau Torfaen ar gyfer ehangu Dechrau'n Deg yn unol â chynlluniau Llywodraeth Cymru.

Ar ôl i Nikola fynychu'r noson wybodaeth a thrafod yr ehangiad gyda'u tîm gofal plant sylweddolodd ei bod yn barod yn bodloni llawer o ofynion Dechrau'n Deg. Er y bydd yn ofynnol i'r feithrinfa gynnal asesiad **ITERS** (Graddfa Sgorio Amgylcheddol Babanod/Plant Bach) i sicrhau ansawdd fel rhan o Raglen Dechrau'n Deg. Dwedodd Nikola fydd hi'n ffeindio hyn yn ddefnyddiol i uwchleuo'r ardaloedd o welliant wrthlaw atgyfnerthu'r ymarferf dda sydd yn bodloni'n barod. Unwaith penderfynodd Nikola i dendro, ffeindiodd hi'r broses yn weddol syml ond cyfaddefodd hi cymerodd e lawer o amser. Fodd bynnag, ar ôl mynd drwy'r broses yn barod roedd yn barod am yr hyn oedd yn ei olygu. Ar ôl cofrestru gyda 'Sell2Wales' llwyddodd i greu cyfrif Proactis a mynd drwy'r tender cam wrth gam. Atebodd gyfres o gwestiynau ac roedd angen iddi lanlwytho dogfennau polisiâu'r sefydliad, cyfrifon a thystiolaeth ategol y sefydliad i'r wefan. Cafodd y broses i gyd ei gyflawni ar-lein gyda nifer penodol o sgiliau llenyddiaeth cyfrifiadureg yn ofynnol. Fodd bynnag, cynigiodd Torfaen lawer o gefnogaeth yn eu parch. Ar ôl i'w thendr gael ei gyflwyno i'r Awdurdod Lleol i'w gymeradwyo, gellir ei hychwanegu wedyn at y rhestr o ddarparwyr sy'n cynnig Dechrau'n Deg y gall rhieni ddewis ohonynt.

Ar ddechrau'r broses roedd Nikola wedi bod ychydig yn amheus, yn ofni y byddai cynnig lleoedd Dechrau'n Deg yn golygu llawer mwy o waith papur ar gyfer cyfraddau ariannu isel iawn a mwy o straen iddi hi a'i staff. Fodd bynnag, wnaeth anghenion rhieni a theluoedd yn ei chymuned ei perswadiodd o'r diwedd i gymryd rhan. Byddai rhieni cymwys yn gallu cael hyd at 12.5 awr o ofal plant o ansawdd uchel am ddim yr wythnos, gan wneud gofal plant ychydig yn fwy fforddiadwy i rieni. Roedd pryder hefyd mai dim ond sesiynau 5 neu 10 awr y mae model busnes y lleoliad yn eu cynnig felly byddai'n rhaid i deuluoedd ariannu'r 2.5 awr arall. Dywedodd Nikola "Rwy'n ei weld fel prawf ar gyfer y dyfodol. Mae gennym lawer o blant 2 oed ar hyn o bryd ond nid ydym yn gwybod beth allai ddigwydd mewn dwy flynedd ac efallai y bydd y sesiynau dechrau'n deg yn cefnogi cynaliadwyedd."



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