The struggle to remain sustainable.

Meithrinfa Ser Bach opened in Anglesey in September 2014. The nursery is registered for up to 55 children and was last inspected in October 2018 when it was given a silent rating of Excellent in all 4 areas. However, the nursery has been facing challenges lately due to the pandemic and the opening of two wrap-around childcare settings in local schools.

While the nursery has been trying its best to provide quality services, the current economic and environmental factors have made it challenging to minimize expenses and remain sustainable. They have faced increased competition and challenges around the cost of living leading them to review their service and look at ways to diversify.

The Change in the Childcare Landscape:

Despite there already being three nurseries in the town, two further wrap-around childcare settings have or are due to open on local school sites. The first one was opened in September 2023, and eight families handed their notice in to the nursery in one afternoon. In total, twelve families have left the nursery to go to wrap-around care in local schools. This has resulted in the loss of 40% of the preschool room.

Meithrinfa Ser Bach, a preschool service provider, based in a small town, has projected that it may incur a loss when the other new wrap-around service opens in the same town by September 2024. The management team of Meithrinfa Ser Bach has assessed the current market trends, the competition, and the impact of the new service on its business and estimated a potential loss of approximately 50% of its remaining preschoolers. The loss could have significant financial implications, including revenue loss, decreased profits, and the potential for downsizing of its workforce.

Specifically, two-thirds of the senior staff team have resigned from their roles, with uncertainty about the future of childcare playing a significant role in their decision to leave. Unfortunately, none of them have remained in the childcare sector.

In addition, their sudden departure has added to the workload of the management team and the remaining staff, many of whom have been working tirelessly to minimise the impact on the children and ensure that the facility continues to provide high quality care for children.

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The increase in the minimum wage in April will also require the nursery to increase its prices, resulting in a loss on all of the sessions funded by the Childcare Offer at £5 per hour by an average of £1.73 per hour.

Efforts to Mitigate the losses:

In light of the challenges, Meithrinfa Ser Bach has consulted with all of its parents and decided to change its opening hours to attempt to reduce the increase costs passed onto parents.

To ensure a consistent quality of care for the children the nursery has plans in place to monitor, support and guide new members of staff. This provides consistency for the children and ensures the nursery maintains its high standards.

To diversify the nursery's business, Meithrinfa Ser Bach has adapted the nursery building and has opened a children's toy and gift shop on the site. Siop Ser Bach has satellite units opening across the North West and attends events on weekends. The nursery is also working on a planning application to extend the shop and open a community room with a small café area, which will offer a new source of revenue.

Meithrinfa Ser Bach is facing a perfect storm with rising costs and   reduced income due to the competition from new provision on school sites. This is compounded by the the impact of increased staffing costs and low funding rates. The nursery is trying to survive by reducing costs, changing its opening hours, and diversifying its business. It remains to be seen how long the nursery can sustain itself under these conditions. The management team is currently exploring strategies to mitigate the impact, but there are no guarantees of success.

Strategic planning, financial support and better collaboration between policymakers and childcare providers are vital to meeting the needs of both parents and childcare providers alike. The loss of experienced senior staff members from Meithrinfa Ser Bach is evidence of this need.

Case study: The struggle to remain sustainable . May 2024.

Further support

- https://ndna.org.uk/childcare-and-early-years-policy/welsh-government-support-and-information/
- https://siopserbach.cymru/home/

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Y frwydr i barhau'n gynaliadwy.

Agorodd Meithrinfa Sêr Bach yn Ynys Môn ym mis Medi 2014. Mae'r feithrinfa wedi'i chofrestru ar gyfer hyd at 55 plentyn ac fe'i harolygwyd diwethaf ym mis Hydref 2018 pan gafwyd gradd fud o Ragorol ym mhob un o'r 4 ardal. Er hyn, mae'r feithrinfa wedi wynebu heriau'n ddiweddar oherwydd y pandemig ac wedi i ddau leoliad gofal plant cofleidiol agor mewn ysgolion lleol.

Er bod y feithrinfa yn ymdrechu i ddarparu gwasanaethau o safon, mae'r ffactorau economaidd ac amgylcheddol presennol wedi ei gwneud hi'n anodd lleihau costau ac i barhau'n gynaliadwy. Maent yn wynebu mwy o gystadleuaeth ac mae'r heriau ynghylch costau byw wedi'u harwain i adolygu eu gwasanaeth ac edrych ar ffyrdd o arallgyfeirio.

Newid yn Nhirwedd Gofal Plant:

Er bod tair meithrinfa eisoes yn y dref, mae dau leoliad gofal plant cofleidiol pellach wedi, neu ar fin agor ar safleoedd ysgolion lleol. Agorwyd yr un cyntaf ym mis Medi 2023, ac yn sgil hyn, rhoddodd 8 teulu eu rhybudd i'r feithrinfa mewn un prynhawn. Mae cyfanswm o 12 teulu wedi gadael y feithrinfa a symud i ofal cofleidiol mewn ysgolion lleol. Mae hyn wedi arwain at golli 40% o'r ystafell cyn-ysgol.

Mae Meithrinfa Sêr Bach sy'n ddarparwr gwasanaeth cyn-ysgol, ac wedi i'w lleoli mewn tref fechan, yn rhagweld y gall hyn arwain at golled ariannol pan fydd y gwasanaeth cofleidiol newydd arall yn agor yn yr un dref erbyn mis Medi 2024. Mae tîm rheoli Meithrinfa Sêr Bach wedi asesu tueddiadau'r farchnad bresennol, y gystadleuaeth, ac effaith y gwasanaeth newydd ar ei busnes ac wedi amcangyfri' colled bosibl o tua 50% o'i plant cyn-ysgol sy'n weddill. Gallai'r golled gael goblygiadau ariannol sylweddol, gan gynnwys colli refeniw, lleihau elw, a'r potensial o golli staff.

Yn benodol, mae dwy ran o dair o'r uwch dîm staff wedi ymddiswyddo o'u swyddi, gydag ansicrwydd am ddyfodol gofal plant yn chwarae rhan sylweddol yn eu penderfyniad i adael. Yn anffodus, nid oes yr un ohonynt wedi aros yn y sector gofal plant.

Yn ogystal, mae eu hymadawiad sydyn wedi ychwanegu at lwyth gwaith y tîm rheoli a'r staff sy'n weddill, y mae llawer ohonynt wedi bod yn gweithio'n ddiflino i leihau'r effaith ar y plant a sicrhau bod y feithrfina yn parhau i ddarparu gofal o ansawdd uchel i blant.

Bydd y cynnydd yn yr isafswm cyflog ym mis Ebrill yn gorfodi'r feithrinfa i gynyddu prisiau. Mi fydd hyn yn arwain at ddiffyg cyfartalog o £1.73 yr awr ar bob sesiwn a ariennir gan y Cynnig Gofal Plant am £5 yr awr.

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Ymdrechion i leihau'r colledion:

O ystyried yr heriau, mae Meithrinfa Sêr Bach wedi ymgynghori â'i holl rieni ac wedi penderfynu newid ei horiau agor i geisio lleihau'r costau cynyddol a basiwyd i rieni.

Er mwyn sicrhau ansawdd gofal cyson i'r plant, mae gan y feithrinfa gynlluniau ar waith i fonitro, cefnogi ac arwain aelodau newydd o staff. Mae hyn yn darparu cysondeb i'r plant ac yn sicrhau bod y feithrinfa yn cynnal ei safonau uchel.

I arallgyfeirio busnes y feithrinfa, mae Meithrinfa Sêr Bach wedi addasu adeilad y feithrinfa ac wedi agor siop deganau ac anrhegion plant ar y safle. Mae gan Siop Sêr Bach unedau *'satellite'* sy'n agor ar draws y Gogledd Orllewin a mynychir digwyddiadau ar benwythnosau. Mae'r feithrinfa hefyd yn gweithio ar gais cynllunio i ymestyn y siop ac i agor ystafell gymunedol gyda caffi bach, fydd yn cynnig ffynhonnell refeniw newydd.

Mae Meithrinfa Sêr Bach yn wynebu sefyllfa heriol, gyda chostau cynyddol ac incwm yn lleihau oherwydd y gystadleuaeth gan ddarpariaeth newydd ar safleoedd ysgolion. Mae hyn yn cael ei waethygu gan gostau staff uwch a chyfraddau cyllido isel. Mae'r feithrinfa yn ceisio goroesi drwy leihau costau, newid ei horiau agor, a thrwy arallgyfeirio ei busnes. Rhaid aros i weld pa mor hir gall y feithrinfa gynnal ei hun o dan yr amodau hyn. Ar hyn o bryd mae'r tîm rheoli yn ceisio dod o hyd i ffyrdd o leihau'r effaith, ond nid yw llwyddiant yn sicr.

Mae cynllunio strategol, cymorth ariannol a chydweithio gwell rhwng llunwyr polisi a darparwyr gofal plant yn hanfodol i ddiwallu anghenion tebyg rhieni a darparwyr gofal plant. Mae colli uwch staff profiadol o Meithrinfa Sêr Bach yn dystiolaeth o'r angen hwn.

Astudiaeth Achos: Y frwydr i aros yn gynaliadwy. Mai 2024.

Cefnogaeth pellach

- https://ndna.org.uk/childcare-and-early-years-policy/welsh-government-support-and-information/
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