

The Tendering Process for Early Education and Flying Start.

Active Childcare have two childcare settings in Wrexham. Rosset House Nursery is set in extensive grounds on the outskirts of Wrexham and is registered for 68 places. Little Scholars is located on the campus of Glyndwr University in the centre of Wrexham and is registered for 91 places. Both settings have successfully participated in the tendering processes with Wrexham Borough Council to provide Early Education and Flying Start for their eligible children.

Rebecca Mottram, Director of Active Childcare has shared how she found the whole process.

How did you find out about the process to tender for Early Education and Flying Start?

We found out through our link teacher, information from the early education team, the local childcare team and from other settings during networking, as well as updates from NDNA.

How easy was it to access the Sell2Wales website and follow the process?

This was quite daunting, especially for someone like me who is not great with IT. The account was easy enough to set up but finding the correct 'lot' was stressful due to the sheer number of them on there. Lot numbers were supplied but like with all things electronic the worry is you have not done it right – until it shows on your account. And in my case, I had two settings, so this meant four lots of information to complete.

Did you feel you needed a high level of computer literacy to go through the process?

I think being confident in using a computer would make the process easier and having the confidence to gather information electronically and roam the sites is beneficial. My manager is much more confident than I am, and I relied on her to help me navigate the initial start of the process.

How straightforward was the tendering process?

Overall, the process was straight forward. For Early Education and Flying Start there were the initial questions and then the application. It was time consuming and some of the information asked for was probably not needed, but none of the information required was difficult.

Was there any aspect of the process that was unexpected or difficult?

Uploading the information at the end was difficult as our internet connection is not very strong, and this did cause a lot of stress. I submitted and had the acceptance from the system that my application had been submitted and then after the deadline had passed, I was contacted to ask why I had only applied for one nursery and not the other. This obviously sent me into a panic, however I took screenshots and printed each step so I had proof I had submitted on time and all information was accounted for. This mix up was put down to a technical difficulty.

How long after completing the process did you hear from the Local Authority?

I can't remember the exact timescales but I remember thinking it was a while (or at least felt like a long time), I know we were coming up to the end of term and we hadn't had confirmation. I knew no other settings had heard, so I wasn't too concerned my application had been denied, however Flying Start was new to our settings and I remember thinking we haven't got much time to set it up ready for the new term in September.

What support was available to you in completing the tender from the Local Authority, NDNA or Business Wales?

There was a lot of support available on the process, from all organisations which was helpful and I definitely used!

Is there anything else you would like to include in this case study?

I obviously understand the importance of ensuring the process is fair and extensive – after all, this directly impacts the children. I think some of the questions didn't need to be included as it made the process lengthier than it needed to be, especially when there were so many pressures on the sector at that time.

Going through the tendering process was undoubtedly time consuming and a little intimidating. However with support from the Local Authority and umbrella organisations Rebecca was able to successfully tender for Early Education and Flying Start and is now able to offer these important initiatives to the eligible families and children attending Active Childcare's nurseries.

“As settings we already had a good understanding of the expectations of Early Education, what was nice was that before the tender went live, we were able to meet with Flying Start to gain a better understanding of their expectations and make an informed decision on if it was the right move for us to apply. I'm glad we did as we can now offer Early Education and Flying Start and in our Little Scholars Nursery we went from having 4 Flying Start children our first September, to having 25 children in the Spring and Summer term.”

Case study: The Tendering Process for Early Education and Flying Start. June 2024.

Further support

- <https://ndna.org.uk/childcare-and-early-years-policy/welsh-government-support-and-information/>
- <https://www.gov.wales/flying-start-programme>