

Case study: Additional support required to run a sustainable business. Little Stars Nursery, Pontypool

Little stars Nursery opened in 2003 and is owned and managed by Emma Matthews and Marie Ellis-Jones, two qualified and experienced early years school teachers.

Additional support is required to run a sustainable business.

As last financial year (22/23) we operated at a loss. This year we are hoping to break even based on a 13% increase in our daily rate coming into effect April 24. We had to increase our fees in June 23 by 10% and again in April 24 by 13 %. We have had a few families who have reduced days after receiving the fee increase letters in March 24. We are managing this by offering places to people on the waiting list. Some of which have had to go elsewhere as we couldn't accommodate them. We have tried to review all our outgoings and have drilled down further in the hope that the 13% increase does not leave us in a deficit.

When looking at the fee structure we took into consideration the following:

Wages and staffing levels (increase in line with National living / minimum wage)

Utilities

Rent

Food

Insurance

Consumables e.g. cleaning/PPE/art and craft/admin

Professional fees e.g. solicitor/accountant

Training

Uniform

Staff welfare

Renewals, repairs and maintenance

Gardening

We offer the Childcare Offer for children aged 3 & 4, however we have to subsidise this and running at a loss.

The cost of our full day (8-6) is £63.00, and we only receive £50.00 funding, and £9.00 from parents (Max food cost) therefore there is a shortfall on every full day sold to a funded child. We don't charge any extras charge for food, nappies, pickup/drop off, or off-site activities. This shortfall is made up by non-funded customers paying the price in full. This equates to a loss of £21, 312 in full days sold to funded children. Last financial year there were 37 children receiving the Childcare Offer, therefore we ran at a loss.

Breakdown of costs for 3-4 year olds

Our monthly costs are as follows:

Staff costs £11,049

Rent / Mortgage / utilities and service charge £2320

Training cost is £238

Food £1460

Additional support for Additional Learning Needs children £450

Plus resources, including printing, activity resources, transport and consumables £620

And then we have additional costs which come under miscellaneous which is £250, and this is for repairs and renewals, telephone, uniform, nappy removal for ALN children, waste and recycling.

Grants

We have received Early Years Development Grant (EYDG) from Education children and from Recruit, Recover and Raise Standards (RRRS) grant. Unfortunately, we missed out on the capital assets funding 22/23 as there wasn't enough money left in the pot when we applied. Hopefully we can apply again this financial year 23/24. EYDG and RRRS continue to support the attainment of children claiming Childcare offer.

We can clearly link this to our setting improvement plan and Self-evaluation processes. We have the autonomy to spend this within the WG guidelines to meet the needs of the children/families in our settings. Capital assets we hope to access this year as we desperately need to replace carpets and flooring. This will help support our sustainability if we can use this grant. We do have to pay tax on

grants as this goes down as income so we must weigh up grants against need as tax is a consideration to put away each month ready for our self-assessment tax return.

A sustainability grant held within the Local Authority would enable settings to apply for support as and when they needed it. If they had a large outgoing like needing to upgrade their kitchen linked to your score on the door, settings could apply for a grant to keep them from being in a deficit.

Additional training grants to support workforce upskilling during the implementation of the Curriculum for Funded Non-Maintained Nursery Settings (CFNMS), Early Childhood, Play, Learning and Care (ECPLC), and assessment arrangements for Funded Non-Maintained Nursery Settings (FNMS).

How the lack of funding has impacted the quality of childcare

Historically we had an additional “float” member of staff that worked across the setting to support experiences that we value like cooking, fruit cutting for rolling snacks, gardening, and reducing the ratios of NMS to promote quality interactions. In addition, trimming up staff at the beginning and end of the days to reduce staffing costs. This has a direct impact on quality of planning and observations/journals as staff use pockets of this time for completion. It also has a direct impact on staff wellbeing, as everything is being squeezed and this has a knock-on effect on staff retention and recruitment in the sector. We have had to cut back on resources and staff. We struggle now to find surplus money to fund visits in our locality (as a 16-seater minibus is around £160 for a local trip) We used to fund extra-curricular visitors e.g. tri golf, teddy tennis, yoga, happy hands music, animal interactive etc. this is now a luxury we can't afford.

Managing children with Additional Learning Needs (ALN)

Managing children with ALN suspected or confirmed involves a high level of adult child interaction and engagement. The observations and record keeping for children with ALN are much greater. Paperwork includes: - The developmental checklists; reports for Integrated Service for Children with Additional Needs (ISCAN); LA Early Years panel; request for LA involvement support forms which are lengthy requiring evidence attached. In addition, Person Centred Planning (PCP) process record keeping and updates to all stakeholders. School entry planning meetings and enhanced transition packages. Supporting the LA to produce an Individual Development Plan (IDP) for the child when requested. Additional training required comes at a cost to the setting.

Applications to each LA are so different in each of our neighboring authorities. Some termly, some yearly. Reviews and reports form part of this process. Managing the staff attached to any 1:1 support depends on the system within that LA. That doesn't support work force planning when we are unsure if funding allows for this to be extended until they go to school. The impact on staff is often they experience low levels of wellbeing as they manage the burden of additional paperwork, delivery of bespoke PCP targets, deliver speech and language therapy (SALT) care plans, and attendance at PCP meetings termly.

Additional support for a sustainable business

We would like to see parents receiving more support with childcare costs. Funding is just one part of the issue underpinning the state of the sector. Investment must be prioritised to transform the profession. Raising the profile of the sector and practitioners earning more than national and living wage. Allowing settings to charge what they need to facilitate this and compete with the pay and conditions of practitioners who are school based e.g. pensions, sick pay, maternity. Increased opportunities made available to practitioners for Continuing Professional Development (CPD).

Our Education Improvement Grant (EIG) allocation as part of the EYDG is around £600 that only really pays for 6 days of training per year. With a workforce of 25 in one setting we have invested heavily in adding to this. Especially in a period of curriculum reform in Wales, new assessment arrangements and ECPLC. We feel that Childcare offer funding should be reviewed annually in order to keep up with rises in NMW and NLW and the cost of living increase in general.

Emma Matthews and Marie Ellis-Jones Little Stars, Pontypool, Torfaen

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Astudiaeth Achos: Cymorth ychwanegol i gynnal busnes cynaliadwy. Meithrinfa Little Stars, Pont-y-pŵl

Agorodd Meithrinfa Little Stars yn 2003. Emma Matthews a Marie Ellis-Jones yw'r perchnogion a rheolwyr y feithrinfa, y ddwy yn athrawon blynyddol cynnar cymwys a phrofiadol.

Mae angen cymorth ychwanegol i redeg busnes cynaliadwy.

Yn ystod y flwyddyn ariannol ddiwethaf (22/23) gweithredom ar gollod. Eleni rydym yn gobeithio torri'n hafal, mae hyn yn seiliedig ar gynnydd o 13% yn ein cyfradd ddyddiol, a fydd yn dod i rym ym mis Ebrill 24. Bu'n rhaid i ni gynyddu ein ffioedd ym mis Mehefin 23, 10% ac eto ym mis Ebrill 24, 13%. Rydym wedi cael ychydig o deuluoedd sydd wedi lleihau eu diwrnodau wedi iddynt dderbyn y llythyrau cynyddu ffioedd ym mis Mawrth 24. Rydym yn rheoli hyn drwy gynnig lleoedd i bobl ar y rhestr aros. Mae rhai ohonynt wedi mynd i rywle arall gan nad oeddem yn gallu eu cynnwys yn y feithrinfa ar y pryd. Rydym wedi ceisio adolygu ein gwariant ac wedi ceisio gwneud mwy o arbedion, yn y gobaith nad yw'r cynnydd o 13% yn ein gadael mewn diffyg.

Wrth edrych ar strwythur ffioedd gwnaethom ystyried y canlynol:

Cyflog a lefelau staffio (cynnydd yn unol â'r Cyflog Byw Cenedlaethol / Isafswm Cyflog Cenedlaethol)
Biliau cyfleustodau
Rhent
Bwyd
Yswiriant
Nwyddau e.e. glanhau/offer diogelu personol (PPE)/celf a chreffft/gweinyddol
Ffioedd proffesiynol e.e. cyfreithiwr/cyfrifydd
Hyfforddiant
Gwisg gwaith
Lles staff
Gwaith adnewyddu, atgyweirio a chynnal a chadw
Garddio

Rydym yn cynnig y Cynnig Gofal Plant i blant 3 a 4 oed, ond mae'n rhaid i ni sybsideiddio hyn a rhedeg ar golled.

Cost ein diwrnod llawn (8-6) yw £63.00, rydym yn derbyn £50.00 o gyllid, £9.00 gan rieni (uchafswm cost bwyd) felly mae diffyg ar bob diwrnod llawn a gynigir i blentyn a ariennir. Nid ydym yn codi tâl ychwanegol am fwyd, cewynnau, gwasanaeth casglu/gollwng neu weithgareddau oddi ar y safle. Mae'r diffyg hwn yn cael ei gwmpasu gan rieni heb eu hariannu sy'n talu'r pris llawn. Mae hyn yn arwain at golled o £21,312 am ddiwrnodau llawn a ddarperir i blant a ariennir. Llynedd, gyda 37 o blant yn derbyn y Cynnig Gofal Plant, gwnaethom weithredu ar golled.

Costau ar gyfer plant 3-4 oed

Mae ein costau misol fel a ganlyn:

Costau Staffio £11,049.

Rhent / Morgais / biliau cyfleustodau a thâl gwasanaeth £2320.

Cost hyfforddiant yw £238

Bwyd £1460

Cymorth ychwanegol i blant Anghenion Dysgu Ychwanegol £450

Yn ogystal ag adnoddau, gan gynnwys argraffu, adnoddau gweithgaredd, trafndiaeth a nwyddau traul £620

Ac yna mae gennym gostau ychwanegol sy'n dod o dan amrywiol sy'n £250, ac mae hyn ar gyfer atgyweirio ac adnewyddu, ffôn, gwisg gwaith, cael gwared cewynnau ar gyfer plant ADY, gwastraff ac ailgylchu.

Grantiau

Rydym wedi derbyn Grant Datblygu'r Blynyddoedd Cynnar (GDBC) gan blant Addysg a grant Recriwtio, Adfer a Chodi Safonau (RACHs). Yn anffodus, methom ar gyllid asedau cyfalaf 22/23 gan nad oedd digon o arian ar ôl yn y pot pan gyflwynon ein cais. Y gobaith yw gallwn ymgeisio eto yn y flwyddyn ariannol 23/24. Mae GDBC ac RACHs yn parhau i gefnogi plant sy'n hawlio'r cynnig Gofal Plant.

Gallwn gysylltu hyn â'n cynllun gwella a'n prosesau hunanwerthuso. Mae gennym y rhyddid i wario'r arian yma o fewn canllawiau LIC, i gwrdd ag anghenion y plant a'r teuluoedd yn ein lleoliadau. Rydym yn gobeithio cael mynediad at asedau cyfalaf eleni gan fod wir angen i ni newid ein carpedi a deunyddiau lloriau eraill. Bydd defnyddio'r grant hwn yn helpu i wella ein cynaliadwyedd. Mae angen

i ni dalu treth ar grantiau oherwydd ei fod yn cael ei gyfrif fel incwm. Felly, mae rhaid i ni ystyried y dreth wrth benderfynu a oes angen y grant arnom, er mwyn neilltuo arian bob mis i dalu am ein treth hunanasesiad. Nid ydym wedi'n cofrestru ar gyfer TAW ac felly ni allwn ei godi na'i hawlio. Yn Little Stars, rydym yn credu, pe bai'r cyllid yn cael ei ddarparu ar y gyfradd gywir, byddai llai o angen am grantiau.

Byddai grant cynaliadwyedd a reolir gan yr Awdurdod Lleol (ALI) yn caniatáu i leoliadau ofyn am gymorth pryd bynnag y bo angen. Er enghraifft, pe bai lleoliad yn wynebu cost sylweddol fel uwchraddio ei gegin i wella ei sgôr, gallent wneud cais am grant i osgoi mynd i ddiffyg ariannol.

Grantiau hyfforddi ychwanegol i gefnogi uwchsgilio'r gweithlu wrth weithredu'r Cwricwlwm ar gyfer lleoliadau meithrin a ariennir nas cynhelir, Chwarae, Dysgu a Gofal Plentyndod Cynnar, a threfniadau asesu ar gyfer lleoliadau meithrin a ariennir nas cynhelir.

Sut mae diffyg cyllid wedi effeithio ar ansawdd gofal plant

Yn hanesyddol, roedd gennym aelod staff ychwanegol "hyblyg" oedd yn gweithio ar draws y lleoliad i gefnogi profiadau rydym yn eu gwerthfawrogi fel coginio, torri ffrwythau ar gyfer byrbrydau, garddio, a lleihau'r cymarebau Safonau Gofynnol Cenedlaethol (SGC) i hyrwyddo rhyngweithio o ansawdd. Yn ogystal, gwnaethom leihau lefelau staffio ar ddechrau a diwedd y dydd i leihau costau staffio. Mae hyn yn effeithio'n uniongyrchol ar ansawdd cynllunio ac arsylwadau/cyfnodolion, gan fod staff yn defnyddio amser cyfyngedig i gwblhau'r tasgau hyn. Mae hefyd yn effeithio'n uniongyrchol ar les staff, wrth i alwadau cynyddol greu pwysau ychwanegol, gan effeithio ar y gallu i gadw a recriwtio staff. O ganlyniad, rydym wedi gorfod lleihau adnoddau a staff. Mae'n heriol nawr dod o hyd i arian ychwanegol ar gyfer ymweliadau lleol, gan fod bws mini 16 sedd, yn costio tua £160 y daith. Yn flaenorol, gwnaethom ariannu gweithgareddau allgyrsiol fel 'tri-golf', tennis tedi, ioga, cerddoriaeth dwylo hapus, a phrofiadau rhyngweithiol anifeiliaid, ond mae'r rhain bellach wedi dod yn foethusrwydd anfforddiadwy.

Rheoli plant ag Anghenion Dysgu Ychwanegol (ADY)

Mae rheoli plant sydd ag ADY a amheuir neu a gadarnheir yn gofyn am lefel uchel o ryngweithio ac ymgysylltu rhwng oedolion a phlant. Mae'r arsylwadau a'r angen i gadw cofnodion sy'n ofynnol ar gyfer y plant hyn yn llawer mwy helaeth. Mae gwaith papur yn cynnwys rhestrau gwirio datblygiadol, adroddiadau ar gyfer y Gwasanaeth Integredig ar gyfer Plant ag Anghenion Ychwanegol (*Integrated Service for Children with Additional Needs - ISCAN*), cyflwyniadau i banel Blynyddoedd Cynnar yr ALLau, a ffurflenni hir yn gofyn am gymorth a thystiolaeth ychwanegol gan yr ALLau. Yn ogystal, mae angen cadw cofnodion manwl a diweddariadau sy'n gysylltiedig â'r arferion sy'n canolbwyntio ar yr

unigolyn mewn addysg (*Person Centred Planning - PCP*), cyfarfodydd cynllunio mynediad ysgol, a pheycynnau pontio gwell. Mae cefnogi'r ALLau i greu Cynllun Datblygu Unigol (*Individual Development Plant - IDP*) ar gyfer y plentyn, pan ofynnir amdano, hefyd yn ychwanegu at y llwyth gwaith. Daw'r hyfforddiant ychwanegol yma gost i'r lleoliad.

Mae ceisiadau i bob ALI mor wahanol ym mhob un o'n hawdurdodau cyfagos. Rhai yn dymhorol, rhai'n flynyddol. Mae adolygiadau ac adroddiadau yn rhan o'r broses hon. Mae rheoli'r staff sydd ynghlwm wrth unrhyw gefnogaeth 1:1 yn dibynnu ar y system o fewn yr ALI hwnnw. Mae hyn yn rhwystro cynllunio'r gweithlu, gan na allwn fod yn sicr bydd y cyllid yn ddigonol i barhau i gefnogi'r plentyn hyd iddynt ddechrau yn yr ysgol. Yr effaith ar staff yn aml yw eu bod yn profi lefelau isel o les wrth iddynt reoli baich gwaith papur ychwanegol, cyflawni targedau unigolion mewn addysg (*PCP*) pwrpasol, cyflwyno cynlluniau gofal therapi iaith a lleferydd (*Speech and Language Therapy - SALT*), a mynychu cyfarfodydd unigolion mewn addysg yn dymhorol.

Cymorth ychwanegol i fusnes cynaliadwy

Hoffem weld rhieni'n derbyn mwy o gefnogaeth gyda chostau gofal plant. Cyllid yw ond un elfen sy'n cyfrannu at yr heriau cyffredinol sy'n wynebu'r sector. Rhaid blaenoriaethu buddsoddiad i drawsnewid y proffesiwn. Mae hyn yn cynnwys codi proffil y sector a sicrhau bod ymarferwyr yn ennill uwchlaw'r cyflog byw cenedlaethol. Dylid caniatáu i leoliadau osod ffioedd sy'n adlewyrchu'r angen hwn ac sy'n parhau i fod yn gystadleuol gyda'r cyflog a'r buddion a gynigir i ymarferwyr mewn ysgolion, fel pensiynau, tâl salwch, ac absenoldeb mamolaeth. Yn ogystal, dylai fod mwy o gyfleoedd i ymarferwyr gymryd rhan mewn Datblygiad Proffesiynol Parhaus (DPP).

Mae ein dyraniad Grant Gwella Addysg (*Education Improvement Grant - EIG*), sy'n rhan o'r grant Datblygu'r Blynyddoedd Cynnar, oddeutu £600, sy'n cyfateb a thua 6 diwrnod o hyfforddiant y flwyddyn. Gyda gweithlu o 25 mewn un lleoliad, bu'n rhaid i ni fuddsoddi'n sylweddol i ychwanegu at hyn. Mae hyn yn arbennig o bwysig yn ystod cyfnod o ddiwygio'r cwricwlwm yng Nghymru, gyda threfniadau asesu newydd ac CDGPC. Credwn y dylid adolygu'r cyllid Cynnig Gofal Plant yn flynyddol er mwyn sicrhau fod y gyfradd yn cadw i fyny â'r cynnydd yn yr Isafswm Cyflog Cenedlaethol a'r Cyflog Byw Cenedlaethol a chostau byw yn gyffredinol.

Emma Matthews a Marie Ellis-Jones Little Stars, Pontypool, Torfaen

Astudiaeth achos: Cymorth ychwanegol sydd ei angen i redeg busnes cynaliadwy Meithrinfa Little Stars, Pont-y-pŵl V0.1 – GORFFENNAF 2024.