Dear X, [You can find details of your local MP/MSP by entering your postcode here - <https://www.writetothem.com/>]

I am [job title] of [name of setting] in [area/town/village] in your constituency and we currently have [xx] children aged between X to X attend our setting. We provide high quality early learning and childcare which gives children an excellent start in life while also supporting working families.

[You may want to add some information here about what you think makes your nursery special]

I am writing to you because of the concerns I have about the disproportionate impact of the UK Government’s National Insurance Contributions (NICs) increase on early learning and childcare providers. The Scottish Parliament debated the impact of the NICs on both providers and parents on the 20 November 2024 with several MSPs sharing their concerns. I am asking you to write to the Chancellor and the Scottish Government to offer more support for our crucial sector.

We know the Government has had to make difficult decisions to balance public spending commitments, however, there are serious consequences of the measures announced in the Budget for the early learning and childcare (ELC) sector.

Firstly, ELC is a very staff-intensive sector. This is because the adults in settings are crucial to keeping children safe and giving them the best start in life. Nationally, 76% of an average private or voluntary nurseries’ running costs are staffing. We are also bound by strict ratios so we are not able to adjust our staffing levels without reducing the number of children and families we offer places to. This means we are more exposed to any measure which increases staff costs than other businesses.

The National Day Nurseries Association (NDNA) estimate that for the average nursery with 14 staff, the increase in NICs alone will add £10,000 - £12,000 a year to operating costs before the impact of statutory wage increase are taken into account. I have looked at my staffing situation and believe it will add an extra £XXXXX to my operating costs. [add if calculated].

Secondly, due to the amount of income which is dictated by Scottish Government funding decisions, we cannot pass on increased staffing costs to customers in the same way as a shop, restaurant or manufacturer. This has been repeatedly recognised by the Low Pay Commission.

As a consequence, we have a real concern that parents could face higher fees, more providers will close and the level of parent choice for high-quality ELC will be affected. Our sector is vital in ensuring that families are able to work and that children get the best possible start in life.

While we welcome the Scottish Government’s commitment to ensure additional funding will be made available to ensure staff can be paid the Real Living Wage, if we are to be able to offer the places families need in a sustainable way we need support. I am asking you if you will do any of the following things to help my nursery and others like me: (Delete as appropriate)

* Please write to the Chancellor to ask her to ensure nurseries are protected from the increase in National Insurance Contributions in the same way schools are. Funded ELC is a public good and should be protected from this impact in the same way that schools and hospitals are.
* Please urge the Minister for Children, Young People and The Promise to ensure future funding rates increase in line with the true cost of staffing a nursery as well as inflation. This means taking into account Real Living Wage increases and the NICs costs on top of inflation and average earnings increases. If funding rates do not cover costs then it will be more difficult for us to offer the places that we want to, at the quality our children deserve.

I really hope you will be able to speak up for nurseries like mine and the children and families across [constituency] who rely on us. If you aren’t able to do any of the actions above but would like to support us in other ways, please let me know what you will be able to do as any support would be greatly appreciated.

Sign off