

An open letter to all parents and carers with young children

This letter is written to people who care about and understand the importance of high quality early years Childcare and Education. The page has been written, supported and paid for by over 300 caring providers from nurseries, childminders and pre-schools, who currently support and develop over 80,000 children every day.

So far in 2019, according to Ofsted's own figures, 500 childcare settings have closed each month, leaving thousands of children and their parents without appropriate or adequate facilities and it is devastating that the settings struggling the most are in the most deprived areas. It is already too late for many of these.

We are not however, asking for your sympathy. Rather, we are calling for clarity and honesty from the Government and for your increased awareness and support.

While we of course understand the appeal to families of "free" childcare offers, the overly complicated legislation and insufficient funding rates are crippling providers, as we are forced to choose between swallowing losses or cross-subsiding in attempts to remain viable.

The reality is that the high quality childcare every child deserves, costs more to deliver than the funding provided by government.

The hourly funding rates given to providers for 'free' childcare were set in 2015 and have been frozen since then. Outside London, the funding rate can be less than £4 per hour. We asked for the calculation of how this was set. The Department for Education refused and even appealed a decision by the Information Commissioners Office that they must reveal how they calculated the funding rates. You can draw your own conclusions as to why they prefer to hide this.

What we are calling for, is honesty and clarity for families about what is actually 'free'. The Government shout about 'free' childcare, but tell us that funding 'is not intended' to pay for meals, consumables or extra activities and that parents 'can expect to pay' for these. At the point of delivery for parents, it is often therefore not actually free at all.

Alongside the assumption of low pay for staff, the Government do not recognise that the experiences we provide along with, in many cases, nutritious meals and necessary consumables, are essential ingredients in delivering a great experience for your children. Our work is linked to brain development, to proper nutrition, to proper exercise, to great opportunities led by capable and enthusiastic professionals.

We are passionate about attracting, training and paying our professional staff in a way that provides the best for our children. The funding rate suppresses wages in our sector, making retention difficult.

We have no problem at all with any Government wanting to help with the cost of childcare. What we are asking for, is the recognition and acceptance that the quality we want and you need us to provide, has a cost attached to it. Our dedicated staff members are worth and have trained to be worth, more than the national living wage. We want to pay them at a level that recognises they are highly skilled professionals caring for and educating our youngest children. The importance of this cannot be overestimated.

Expanding the availability of 'free' childcare may make for vote grabbing headlines, but extending a failing system in a misleading attempt to win over the electorate, will not end well for anyone.

Children are our focus and you as parents are our biggest allies. So please consider all of this when reading those manifesto pledges because quite simply, Government funded childcare is not 'free'.

Please support us in demanding services that meet the needs of your children and are funded appropriately – thank you

For more information or to offer support email us on

weknow@wecareaboutchildren.co.uk

Signed and supported by

Amberley Nursery & Forest School
Brick by Brick Preschool
Bumbles Day Nursery
Forest Footsteps Childcare
Kiddie Kare Nursery
Abacus Childcare
Abbotswood Day Nursery
ABC Day Nursery
Acorns Nursery School
All Saints Nursery High Lane Pre-School
Ankerville Nurseries
Archfield House and Woodland House Nursery
Aspull Pre-school
Avenue Nursery and Forest School
Baby Bears Day Care
Barbies Footsteps Nursery
Bee Happy Nursery
Bee in the Woods Kindergarten
Beeston Nursery
Bestwood Park ELP Nursery
Big Discoveries Nursery
Blossoms Pre-School LTD
Blue Sky Day Nursery
Bottomley Little Latham Farmers
Bow Lane Pre-school
Bramble House Day Nursery
Bright Skies
Broadfield Nursery
Brooklyn Day Nursery Forest School
Brown Bear Childcare Nursery & Preschool
Buckshaw Village Nursery
Building Blocks Child Care
Bush Nursery Group
Busy Bees Childcare
Butterflies Day Nursery
Butterflies Pre-School Playgroup
Butterfly Nursery
Chadwell St Mary Day Nurseries
Charwood Nursery & Pre-school
Cheeky Monkeys Day Nursery
Cheeky Monkeys Two Day Nursery
Chelmsford
Cherubs
Child First Welbeck
Chives Montessori School
Cobnuts Woodland Nursery and Forest School
Colourbox Montessori Schools
Country Day Nurseries
Cygnet Day Nurseries
Daffodils Outdoor Nursery
Daisy Chain Nursery
DDC Nursery and Preschool
Dotties Nursery
Ducklings Nursery
Early Steps Preschool
Early Years Care & Education
Enchanted Day Nursery and Holiday Club
Falconwood Preschool
Farm Work Play
Farmyard Friends Day Nursery
Five Weats Preschool
Fledglings Preschool and Nursery Ltd
Footsteps Nursery School
Forget Me Not Private Day Nursery
Fowler Flowers Day Care & Little Flowers
Giggles & Wiggles Nursery
Grafton Childcare
Grassroots
Happy Tree
Happy Tree West Drayton
Hatton Wilderness Pre School
Hazeldene Day Nursery
Highmeadows Day Nursery
Hipswell Village Kindergarten Catterick Garrison
Home From Home Children's Day Care
Hoosaints Pre-School
Hopscotch Day Nursery
Hungry Caterpillar Day Nurseries
Kiddies Corner
Kiddy Kapers Daycare
Kids Allowed
Kindervine Day Nursery
Kingdom Preschool
Kingwood Childcare
Knowledgegms Day Nursery
Lawnwood Childcare Ltd
Limes Play and Learn Little Lambs Preschool
Little Aisha Nursery
Little Barn Owls Nurseries
Little Cherubs
Little Cherubs Day Nursery & Preschool
Little Learners
Little Cubs Nursery
Little Faces Childcare
Little Hubbers Day Nursery
Little Monkeys Day Nursery
Little Moonbeams Day Nursery
Little Oaks Nursery
Homestead Wrexham
Little Potters Nursery
Little Rascals
Little Robins Day Nursery
Little Sandhurst Nursery Group
Little Stars
Little Wellies Nursery
Little Wrens Milford Explorers
Magdalen Nursery
Mains House Nursery
Meadows pre-school
Millswood Nurseries
Minibuddies Pre-school
Monkey House Nursery School
Monkey Puzzle
Monkey Puzzle Day Nursery
Monkey Puzzle Day Nursery
Munchkins Kindergarten Ltd
Munchkins Nurseries
Next Generation Day Nursery (Barnehurst) Ltd
Novostart Nursery & Preschool/Abacus Nursery
Old School House
Once Upon a Time
Once upon a time Nursery
Ossett Childcare & Pre-School
Over The Rainbow Day Nursery
Paint Pots
Pebbles Daycare
Peekaboo Childcare
Plantpot's Nurseries
Puddle Ducks
Puddle Ducks Alvingham
Pudsey Day Nursery
Pump Farm Day Nursery
Rushcliffe Day Nurseries
Sandy Bears Nursery & Pre School
Sallywags Nursery
Seeros Daycare Nursery Ltd
Silly Smiles and Cheeky Smiles
Simbas Den Day Nursery
Sixpenny Nursery
Spinning Tops Nursery
St James Nursery and Pre-School
St Nicholas Playgroup (Strood)
St Paul's Day Nursery
Starshine & Little Stars Nursery
Stepping Stones Day Nursery
Stepping Stones Nursery
Streatham Montessori Nursery
Sunflowers
Sunflowers Nursery,
Super Stars Nursery
Superpeas Nursery and Pre-School
The Avenue Day Nurseries
The Bristol Montessori
The Butterfly Patch Nurseries
The Family Tree Childrens Day Nursery
The Hospital Day Nursery
The Learning Journey Day Nursery
The Little Lane Nursery
The Meadows Nursery School
The Nursery @ St Christopher's
The Orchard Nature Nursery Limited
The Priory Day Nursery Ltd
The World Of Play 2007 Ltd
Tots Teachers Pre-school
Tree Nursery Schools
Treehoppers Forest Kindergarten
Truly Scrumptious Early Years Nursery
Turtle Day Nursery
Vicarage Farm Pre-school
Wellies Day Nursery Ltd
Wellington Villa Nursery
Wells House Kindergarten
Wickersley Nursery & Seeds to Stars Nursery
Willow Park Montessori Day Nursery
Willowdene Nursery
Woodentops Preschool
Woodside Preschool Coventry
Worlebury Willows Preschool
Yellow Wellies Day Nurseries
Applegarth Day Nursery
Banana Moon Day Nursery Rothwell/ Mirfield
Busy Bees
Come and Play Lydney
Daisy Chains Nursery
Ducklings Leeds Childcare
Fitcap Nursery Little Explorers
Green Gables Montessori Nursery
Homestead Wrexham
Little Butterflies Preschool
Little Learners
Little Sunshines pre-school
Monkey Puzzle Day Nursery
Rainbow Preschool
Smiley Happy People
Snapdragons Nurseries
Songbirds Day Nursery, Pre School and Kids Club
Village Nursery Group
Your Nursery Ltd