

Ambitious new plan to develop Wales' childcare workforce

Childcare is one of the biggest challenges facing working families. During this Assembly term, the Welsh Government will provide 30 hours a week of government-funded early education and childcare for working parents of 3 and 4 year olds for up to 48 weeks a year.

The Childcare, Play and Early Years workforce plan sets out the Welsh Government's vision for delivering this commitment, by developing and professionalising the childcare and play workforce and attracting the right people into the sector, ensuring they have the right skills and qualifications, and supporting new and existing business to grow.

To support childcare providers to grow and operate sustainably, the Welsh Government will prioritise support for the care sector, as outlined in the Economic Action Plan launched earlier this week, by supporting new and existing business to increase the number of childcare places on offer across Wales.

Currently, around 23,300 people work with our youngest children in childcare settings and Foundation Phase settings across Wales.

The plan's three key priorities are:

- **Prioritising support to invest in building capacity and capability across the sector**, this includes working with CWLWM and Business Wales to provide business support services to childcare businesses; provide enhanced Small Business Rate Relief for the childcare sector from April 2018 which increases relief from £12,000 to £20,500; and £100,000 over the next 3 years to support those providers participating in the early implementer pilots and those seeking to expand or start-up their business.
- **Attracting high quality recruits** by developing a recruitment framework to promote a career in childcare and play.
- **Raising standards and skills** by offering a structured training and development route based on a new suite of qualifications for the sector from September 2019, and by developing a career pathway for child-minders and home carers and working with Welsh Universities to embed competency into Early Years and Childhood degrees.

Launching the new plan, the Minister for Children and Social Care, Huw Irranca-Davies said:

“The provision of affordable, accessible, quality early years provision, available at the times parents need it, plays an essential role in boosting the economy, helping parents to return to work and creating further employment opportunities within the

childcare sector itself.

“Those who care for our youngest children play a vital role in helping us give our children a flying start in life. High-quality early education and childcare produces greater long-term benefits for our children and strongly influences their future life chances.

“Where the workforce is equipped with the knowledge, skills and behaviours to provide high-quality childcare and play, the effects on children can be profound, with particular benefits for children from disadvantaged backgrounds, or children who are disabled or have additional learning needs.

“The plan I’m unveiling today recognises the challenges the current economic climate presents to the sector and sets out clear and tangible actions to prioritise support to build the capability and capacity of the childcare workforce and the sector to drive our ambitions forward. It also sets out a longer term vision which is ambitious, but also essential if we want to enhance the quality of care we offer our children and to fully realise the potential of this committed sector and its workforce.”