

1140 ELC Case Study

Fochabers Nursery & Out of School

When initial plans began to be made to make the move from 600 hours to 1140 hours, our expectation was that many parents would not take up the full hours. Reality has proved to be very different. It is the exception at Fochabers and at our other two nurseries in the area that parents request reduced hours.

Costs have increased greatly, without the increases to the hourly rate that the Moray Council have made over the phasing in of 1140, we would not have been able to cope financially.

It has not just been a simple pro-rata increase in costs from 600 to 1140 hours, but additional costs incurred. It wasn't just a case of simply increasing staff hours, many more staff have been needed in order for us to cover lunches and remain in ratios. More staff mean more training, uniform, holiday pay and associated costs. We also now require lunch auxiliaries at two of our nurseries, we cannot afford to have qualified, experienced staff tied up serving lunches, clearing up and washing up. Our pension costs have increased greatly, not only due to the government increasing employer contributions but with staff hours increasing more staff then qualified for the pension.

More staff members whether, permanent, supply, full-time or part-time all require training, both compulsory training and towards their annual 12 hours of Post Registration Training and Learning (PRTL). Training courses can incur attendance costs and usually incur staff cover costs.

Increasing from 3 hours 10 minutes a day to 6 hours per day (we are term time only) has brought increased administration and the need for more Senior staff. Increased income and staffing have increased our accounting costs too.

We are required to pay the Real Living Wage but do pay all staff above this. We feel that £9.90 (recently increased from £9.50) is an insulting rate for a qualified, experienced professional to earn. There also has to be a differentiation between staff. We have staff working towards qualifications, qualified staff, senior staff and management. We also have to try to compete with the wages the Council are able to pay which are higher for comparable jobs. When the government states that we should all pay the Real Living wage they and councils should not make their calculations based on that is all that is paid.

It needs to be understood that an appropriate sustainable rate with built in reinvestment potential, and appreciating that you cannot pay every staff member as little as £9.90, is the only way to sustain their vision of high quality provision for 1140 hours. This is even more important in Moray where PVI providers educate 65-70% of ELC children. One size does not fit all council areas.

We are not only seeing an extremely high take up of the full 1140 in our nurseries we are seeing an increase in the numbers of children. Our 2-3 Club is in extremely high demand, and this looks to sustain over the next couple of years this then feeds through to our nurseries.

As with everyone, Covid has had a major impact on our services. Thankfully due to the way the Moray Council handled the pandemic, in relation to ELC, the financial impact was mitigated for our group.

Jessica Myers
Manager

Fochabers Nursery
Mosstodloch Early Learning
Garmouth & Kingston Pre-school
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