



Ein cyf/Our ref DB/00605/25

Lisa Owen
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18 November 2025

Dear Lisa,

I have received correspondence from the Petitions Committee informing me that your petition (P-06-1530) has now been closed. As part of their consideration, the Committee has asked that I engage directly with you to respond to the further comments you raised during the process.

I understand that delivering the Childcare Offer may present financial and operational challenges for some settings, particularly in light of rising costs across the sector. To help address this, the Welsh Government has made 100% business rates relief permanent for childcare settings across Wales, supporting their sustainability and growth.

I recognise the pressures faced by the sector throughout the former three-year review cycle, which is why I committed to an annual review of the funding rate. This will help ensure the flat rate remains fair, sustainable, and reflective of costs. Our review process considers sector feedback, economic conditions, the need to maintain high-quality provision for families across Wales and the need for childcare to remain affordable for families.

The annual survey that informs the rate review, has been completed for 2025 and my officials have gathered feedback from a representative sample of parents. The survey that was issued to parents sought to capture their views and experiences and will be used to help inform ongoing policy development and service delivery.

Parents using the Offer and settings who deliver childcare funded through the Offer have been surveyed in each year since the pilot year of the programme. Since 2022, the Welsh Government has administered these surveys annually in July and August of each year. This ensures that the surveys capture the largest possible cohort of eligible families. A link to the online questionnaire and an invitation to complete it are sent to all parents who have used the Offer and to all settings who have delivered hours of care in the relevant year.

In 2023–24, to inform the 2024 rate review, we received responses from 1,606 parents. The survey was anonymous and did not collect detailed demographic information, as this could potentially be used to identify respondents when combined with other data. While my officials compared the local authority of respondents with monitoring records and are confident that the sample is broadly representative of parents using the programme across

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Wales. For 2024/25, 811 responses have been received from parents, and they are currently being analysed.

In October 2025, the Welsh Government [published a report](#) evaluating the delivery of the the Childcare Offer for the period of September 2023 to August 2024. If you haven't already accessed it, chapter 6 provides an analysis of parent and setting responses (including the questions asked about additional fees).

Thank you for sharing your concerns regarding sector engagement and the role of CWLWM.

I know you are aware that CWLWM was established by the Welsh Government to bring together the five leading childcare organisations in Wales including Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs, Early Years Wales, Mudiad Meithrin, NDNA Cymru, and Coram PACEY Cymru, to work more collaboratively and reduce duplication. While CWLWM is funded by Welsh Government and does deliver work aligned to specific policy priorities, it is not intended to replace direct engagement with providers or act as the sole voice of the sector. For this reason, as part of the 2024 Rate Review, direct engagement sessions were held to discuss the review, and the formation of the survey, with the childcare sector. These sessions were promoted by CWLWM partners and Local Authorities and were open to all providers to attend.

CWLWM's remit includes supporting the development of high-quality, accessible, and sustainable childcare and play work services, and contributing to workforce development. Their strategic role is to share information and best practice across the sector, not to act as a substitute for direct provider representation.

My officials are aware of ongoing activity within the Vale of Glamorgan regarding the implementation of the Childcare Offer, particularly in relation to charging practices. However, our position remains clear and consistent: childcare settings delivering the Offer are not permitted to charge top-up fees to parents for funded hours. This is explicitly stated in the guidance.

They will continue to work with Vale of Glamorgan to ensure consistency of policy application across Wales.

I would like to thank you for bringing this petition forward and creating opportunity to discuss these important issues. I do appreciate that you may be disappointed that the Petitions Committee have chosen not to continue to pursue further action on this however I would encourage continued dialogue with sector representatives. We keep all of our policies under review for consideration in the next electoral cycle.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dawn Bowden', written in a cursive style.

Dawn Bowden AS/MS

Y Gweinidog Plant a Gofal Cymdeithasol
Minister for Children and Social Care