



SETTING UP EARLY YEARS PROVISION



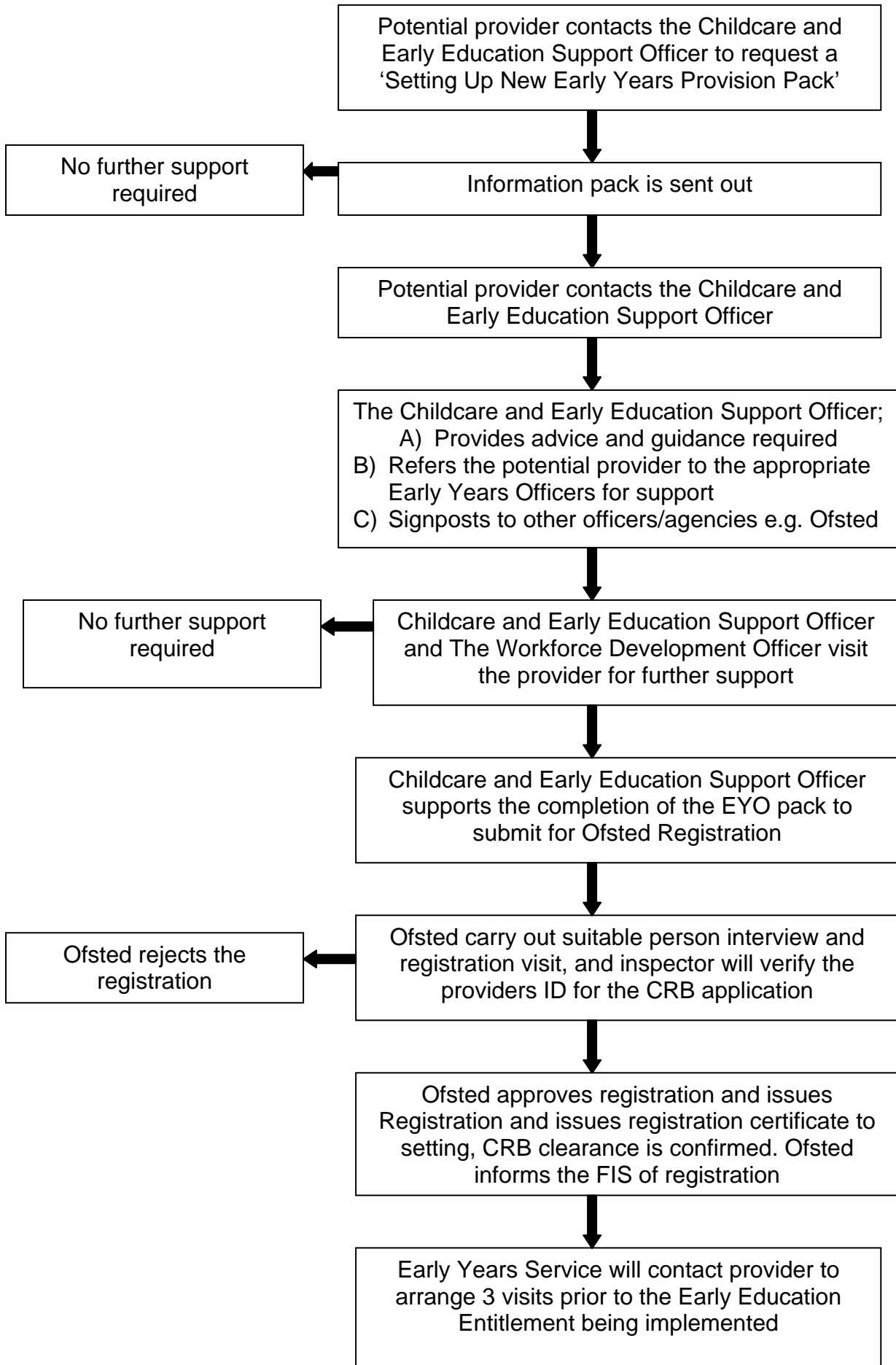
London Borough
of Hounslow

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Setting up Early Years Provision in Hounslow



Starting up Early Years Provision

Providing childcare for pre-school children can be enormously rewarding. It provides a much needed service for local communities, is reassuring to parents and most importantly, gives children a great start. Much research has shown that high quality care and education makes a huge difference to the development and well being of children. This publication provides information on key factors in deciding whether to start a new early years provision.

Opening an early years provision requires commitment and research. Time spent at the start on making sure you understand your community, ensuring that there will be a demand for your provision and that it will be affordable for the local community will prove invaluable to the long-term sustainability of your business.

When starting up your provision, the Hounslow Early Years and Childcare Service should be your first port of call. Local Authorities have the duty to support early year's providers to ensure that there is sufficient childcare to meet the needs of parents in the local area. The Hounslow Early Years and Childcare Service has a Childcare Sufficiency Officer who can advise on where there is a need for additional provision. She can be contacted either by phone on 020 8583 4294 or by email: angela.doidge-nelson@hounslow.gov.uk

Researching the need

An Early Years provision that is not well researched may have problems sustaining their service in the long term. It is important to assess what the demand is likely to be and whether the demand can be met cost effectively. Before setting up your business you should identify exactly what the childcare needs of the whole community are by gathering information in a systematic way.

You need to know how many under-fives there are in the area and what the local population figures are likely to be (e.g. any projected housing developments that might bring additional people into the area). You also need to know which other forms of provision already exist in the area and whether or not they are full. The Hounslow Family Information Service can provide you with details about existing provision. They can be contacted on 0800 783 1696. You might also consider calling other providers to find out if they have a waiting list, and how many children they have on the waiting list. Be upfront with your request as they are best placed to support or deter you in your plans. This information will support you in making a judgement about whether there are under-fives who are currently not provided for and therefore whether there would be a demand for places in your provision.

Having established that there may be a demand for childcare places you have to be sure that the parents of those children want their child to attend some form of provision and what kind of provision they would like. Parents have different aspirations and different needs which impact on their choice of childcare.

Parents are the obvious partner when caring for and educating children in the early years. By building parents' ideas, views and values into the heart of your provision for their children, you will actively engage them to support and help develop your setting. Create opportunities to talk to parents. This can be done informally, for example in launderettes and libraries and in local baby and toddler groups. You can also gain information from other professionals, such as local health visitors, who often have a good picture of community provision in their own area. You could also undertake a survey of the local area, keep in mind the population of the area and whether you would need to translate any written communication into community languages. Always check if the information you require is available from another source, as this could save you valuable time, for example:

- Childcare audits are carried out throughout England and Wales by every local authority. They give information on what type of provision is available in the local area, and if any funding is available.
- The latest report can be found at: www.hounslow.gov.uk/childcare
- Your local Family Information Service can give you lists of other providers i.e. pre-schools, childminders and private nurseries. Telephone : 0800 783 1696 or visit www.childcarelink.gov.uk
- Information is also held at the local library (Community information or Reference section)

During your research think about;

- Who will use it?
- What else is in the area?
- What are the ages of the children locally?
- Are there other schools nearby offering childcare?
- Do children from your community already access local out of school clubs with which you could link?
- Look at national research in childcare trends (www.daycaretrust.org.uk).
- Are there a large number of working parents in the area?
- Find out where local people work – do they travel locally or from outside the area?
- Is there a large employer who may be interested in purchasing places?
- What facilities do the current providers offer?
- What are the age ranges already catered for?

Legal structures

Another important consideration is which type of legal structure to use; this has implications for the way in which your provision is managed and who is liable for any issues that arise. The legal structure has to be determined from the outset as this establishes the “person” in law responsible for all manner of legal transactions, such as taking out a business loan or lease, registering with Ofsted and employing staff. The advantages and disadvantages of different legal structures are explored below.

A summary of common legal structures for businesses

Each legal structure for businesses has advantages and disadvantages.

Running your business as a **sole trader** offers the simplest legal structure. However, it leaves the owner most exposed if something goes wrong. It is generally not suitable for raising capital.

Partnerships share the burden of ownership, allowing two or more people to set up in business together. Like a sole trader, a standard (unlimited) partnership does not have a legal identity separate from that of the partners, so does not have to be registered at Companies House.

Standard partnerships have unlimited liability for the firm's debts. Partners in England, Wales and Northern Ireland are jointly liable for debts owed by the partnership, meaning they have equal responsibility for payment of the whole debt.

However, they are not severally liable, which could make each partner responsible for the entire debt. In Scotland, partners are both jointly and severally liable.

It is also possible to set up as a **limited liability partnership (LLP)**, which can reduce the partners' individual liability risk. LLPs are taxed as partnerships, but have the benefits of being a corporate entity, and members have limited liability. An LLP can enter into contracts and hold property.

Limited companies allow you to raise capital, issue shares and limit your risks. However, there are more rules governing the way they are run.

Social enterprises are businesses with primarily social and/or environmental objectives whose profits are principally reinvested in the business or in the community.

Self-employment means that you:

Are the proprietor of your own business

Have the legal and financial responsibility for its operations

Both sole traders and partners in a partnership are regarded as self-employed. Directors of limited companies - who are office holders - are usually treated as employees for tax and PAYE (Pay As You Earn) purposes. However, if they are treated primarily as shareholders, they will not be classed as employees and will pay tax on any dividends they are granted from the company's profits

Further information can be found through business link at:

<http://www.businesslink.gov.uk/bdotg/action/layer?topicId=1073865730&r.s=e&r.l4=1074022181&r.l1=1073858808&r.lc=en&r.l3=1085110826&r.l2=1085110659&r.i=1073792483&r.t=RESOURCES>

Charity (Unincorporated Association)

A charity is an organisation set up and run by a committee of volunteers who are the trustees of the charity, for exclusively charitable purposes, to the public and not particular individuals. Any profits made by a charitable provision would go back towards funding facilities for the care and education of the children.

The most important benefit of having a charitable-run provision lies with the chance to engage with parents and harness the skills and experiences they have for the benefit of your provision. As a charity, you will be able to enlist the support of the community, for example, fundraising which can be very important, especially in the early days of a provision's existence. Funding through grant-making trusts and local government is more readily available for charitable groups and most of the non-domestic council rates are waived or reduced. There are also tax benefits and charities can claim gift aid on donations from individuals who have paid UK tax. The HM Revenue & Customs charities helpline can provide further information on these benefits. Of course, in order to enjoy the benefits of being a charity, you have to comply with the requirements of the Charities Act, which means a range of extra legal duties, including preparing accounts and keeping records. The trustees are also liable for any debts run up by the provision.

To set up as a new charity contact the Charity Commission for a registration pack. To register as a charity you will need to adopt a constitution (a legal governing document that outlines how the charity is run and managed). The Pre-School Learning Alliance publication 'Managing a Charitably Constituted Provision' provides trustees with practical information on running an unincorporated charity and can be ordered at: <http://www.pre-school.org.uk/search?q=managing+a+charitably+constituted+setting>

Charitable Company (Incorporated Charity)

A charity company is quite simply an organisation that fulfils the requirements and is registered as a charity, as well as being a registered company.

A charitable company retains all the benefits of being a charity, with the additional benefit of limited personal liability for the trustees. Trustees are offered greater protection as the company is regarded as a separate legal entity, and the company itself can enter into contracts and incur liabilities, rather than requiring trustees or members to do this on its behalf. This business model is often recommended when the provision is taking on a large liability, such as ownership of property. However, registering with the Charity Commission and Companies House and complying with both the Companies Act and Charities Act, means a range of extra legal duties and can create a heavy administrative burden on the trustees / directors of the provision.

Useful Contact details

- Charity Commission Tele: 0845 3000 218 web: www.charity-commission.gov.uk
- Companies House Tele: 0870 33 33 636 Web; www.companieshouse.gov.uk
- HM Revenue & Customs Tele: 0845 302 0203(charities helpline) Tele; 0845 915 4515 (register as self employed) web: www.hmrc.gov.uk

Business plan

One of the best ways to analyse the cost of starting up is to draw up a business plan. The business plan should be easy to read, easy to understand and presented in a professional manner. Its content should be based on accurate research and assessment of your childcare market.

Business structure

Before you complete your business plan, you will need to know how you intend to structure your business. Before funding your business, you will want to know who is involved. The way you set up your business will also have an impact on your taxation liabilities and business continuity, for example, what would happen in the event of the death of a partner under a partnership structure.

The usual options for day care provision are:

- Sole trader
- Partnership
- Limited company.

To help you decide on or change your business structure you should seek specialist advice. This may come, for example, from your solicitor, accountant or an independent financial adviser with corporate expertise. You can find these specialists by contacting the relevant association e.g. Law Society, Institute of Chartered Accountants, Association of Chartered Certified Accountants or the Association of Independent Financial Advisers. You should also use word of mouth – recommendations from other businesses. Make sure you interview a shortlist of advisers and are confident that you can build up good working relationships with the people you select.

A typical business plan will consist of the following:

Executive summary	Briefly describes the business objective and opportunity, timescale for realising Provision objectives, level of finance required, and the people involved. This is often written once all other sections are completed.
Sector analysis	Describes the childcare market place, recent trends and developments affecting demand.
Market analysis	Describes specific research conducted for your nursery, market gap, your nursery's potential customers, other providers and their strengths and weaknesses, your nursery's unique selling points, a SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) for your Provision business venture and pricing policy.
Operational plan	Describes objectives for the next three years, depending on the complexity of your childcare venture. Then highlights how the Provision will operate by giving a description of its: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Legal structure – sole trader, partnership or limited company• Features and benefits of childcare service e.g. hours of opening, wraparound care, curriculum• Premises• Management, policies and resources
Management team	Describes in detail those involved in the venture, including their relevant skills and experience and eventual role in the business. Details of team members to be recruited should also be included.
Implementation plan	If starting up a provision, or taking over, this describes the various steps to be taken prior to start up e.g. becoming registered and dealing with the various regulatory authorities, finding premises, employing staff, marketing the nursery.
Marketing plan	Describes the promotion of your Provision business and associated costs.
Financial information	Describes costs, finance required and sources of finance to be investigated and should include a risk and sensitivity analysis. Financial statements such as the cash flow forecast, profit and loss and balance sheet should be included to provide an

idea of how your Provision business will perform over time. The length of the cash flow and profit and loss forecasts will depend on level of investment, but would normally extend to three years.

Appendices

Provide more detailed information such as your policies and procedures, proof of registration, building conversion plans for your provision, CVs of your management team and any other details as appropriate. You will also need to give details of all assumptions made to support your financial information e.g. anticipated occupancy.

Sample format for cash flow forecast

INCOME	MONTH 1	MONTH 2*
Provision fees		
Early Education Entitlement		
Out of school fees		
Milk refund		
Deposits		
Bank loan		
Owner's capital		
Childcare vouchers		
Other		
TOTAL INCOME		
EXPENSES		
Conversion/design build		
Rent and rates		
Heat/Light		
Insurance (premises and business, and including employer's liability and motor)		
Equipment		
Repairs/maintenance		
Cleaning and materials		
Nappies		
Milk		
Stationery/office expenses		
Outings		
Consumable resources		
Food and drink		
Proprietor's drawings		
Salaries and pensions		
National Insurance		
Recruitment/training		
Accountancy		
Legal		
Subscriptions/memberships e.g. NDNA		
Bank charges		

Travel		
Loan repayments		
Loan interest		
Marketing		
Telephone		
TOTAL EXPENSES		
NET CASHFLOW		
OPENING BALANCE		
CLOSING BALANCE		

Sample format for profit and loss account sheet

	TURNOVER
	Less direct costs (£)
Nappies	
Food and drink	
Outings	
Consumable materials	
Milks	
TOTAL DIRECT COSTS	
	GROSS PROFIT (£)
Overheads	
Salaries	
Rent/rates	
Heat/light	
Cleaning materials	
Repairs/maintenance	
Insurance	
Legal	
Recruitment/training	
Telephone	
Equipment	
Accountancy	
Bank charges	
Stationary	
Marketing	
Depreciation	
TOTAL OVERHEADS	
OPERATING PROFITS	
INTEREST	
DRAWING	
TAX	
RETAINED IN BUSINESS	

Sample format for opening balance sheet

BUSINESS NAME:	
	ASSETS
	Fixed assets (£)
Land and buildings	
Furniture, fixtures and equipment	
Vehicles	
TOTAL FIXED ASSETS	
	Current assets
Cash and bank accounts	
Debtors	
Pre-payments	
Other current assets	

TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	
	LIABILITIES
Current liabilities	
Creditors	
Bank loans	
Loans – other	
Other current liabilities	
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	
ASSETS LESS LIABILITIES	
	Long-term liabilities
Mortgages and loans payable	
Other loans of long-term nature	
LONG-TERM LIABILITIES	
TOTAL LIABILITIES	
NET ASSETS	
	Owner's equity
Profit and loss account	
Capital investment	
TOTAL	

Debt finance

Borrowed money or loan tends to have an interest cost. Interest may be variable or fixed rate, with different lenders offering different rates. You will need to prove that your Provision business will yield enough money to repay the loan even when the Provision has not reached profitability. The benefit of this type of funding is that it can be arranged fairly quickly and allows the proprietor to retain ownership of the business.

The major disadvantage of debt finance is that it is repayable whether the Provision business is profitable or not. If the Provision has serious trading difficulties such liabilities, particularly in the instance where large sums have been borrowed, can lead to business difficulties.

Childcare vouchers - are provided by the employer of working parents. They are provided instead of a proportion of their pre-tax salary and therefore save the parent/s money on their Income Tax and National Insurance. Parents are eligible as long as they satisfy certain criteria regarding their childcare costs or tax credits. Further information is available from www.hmrc.gov.uk

Key sustainability factors

There are a number of key factors that will determine the success of your business:

- Understanding local demand for childcare
- Ongoing, affordable use of the Provision premises
- A reliable source of quality staff
- Sufficient income through fees and other funding
- Establishing links with the wider community
- Reputation developed as providing safe, quality, affordable childcare
- Ongoing management expertise.

And finally retaining your vision!

Although running a Provision is very rewarding, it is also very challenging. Retaining your initial vision as to why you set up the Provision e.g. to inspire and educate local children, to help parents improve their family lives, etc, will help you and your staff to remain motivated. Motivation is a key factor in succeeding.

Partnerships

In order for partnerships to work effectively, for example with schools, all those involved in the partnership need to ensure that the lines of communication are kept open, all those involved understand the nature of the community to be served and the range of services that the partnership as a whole can deliver.

Premises

There are two main approaches to starting a day Provision - buying an existing Provision or starting your own.

If you plan to buy a childcare provision, consider the impact the premises have on the business at the moment and how they might affect you. For example, an old building will entail maintenance and improvement costs, whilst a site with room for expansion would give you the chance to increase the number of childcare places on offer, or add new services such as out-of-school care and so make the Provision more viable.

If you are starting your own nursery, premises and regulation are probably the biggest hurdles. The rapid expansion of the sector in recent years, lack of availability of suitable sites and high property prices have meant that finding premises in some areas is problematic, time consuming and expensive.

Before you embark on your search for premises, give some thought to the size and type of building required, the age range of children to be cared for, groupings of children, type of management and possible associated facilities and activities.

Whatever standards you are required to meet, the building must conform to certain regulations before the new provision can be registered for example:

- Premises are safe, secure and suitable for their purpose
- Premises should also be made warm, welcoming and friendly to children and their parents
- Minimum space requirements need to be observed per child
- Minimum numbers of toilets and washbasins
- Staff facilities, such as a rest room, space for keeping records or holding meetings with parents, available within the facility
- Outdoor space, should be safe, secure, well maintained and exclusively for the use of the children.

In addition, each local authority will have its own rules and guidance concerning planning for childcare and you should find these out before you start looking for premises. Please see www.hounslow.gov.uk/planning for further advice

The usual options are having premises purpose built or converting an existing building into a nursery. Both options involve a certain degree of complexity. The purpose built option normally preferred by larger operators in the sector is

costly and is provided by architects or firms that specialise in the design and build of Provision environments. Such specialists can provide a complete design and build solution for your new Provision from concept to completion, providing along the way advice on all aspects of planning approval, building regulations, construction and can even arrange finance. If this is your preferred option for getting started in the Provision business, ensure you liaise with the local authority at every stage, otherwise plans may need to be redrawn to meet its requirements and this could mean additional expense.

For many childcare providers starting a new nursery, conversion of an existing property is the normal entry route. Once you find premises, you will need to get any necessary planning permission before you commit to purchase. Your vendor will need to be prepared to wait for you to get permission.

Remember, you will need to have insurance in place immediately you complete upon the purchase of land and/or a property.

Try the following to find suitable premises

- Locate vacant property in your area that possesses D1 class of use i.e. non-residential institutions. Properties classed as D1 do not require change of use permission for use as a nursery. Some examples include former doctor's surgeries, day centres, schools, art galleries, museums, libraries, halls, and churches. Buildings with D2 class of use such as cinemas, concert halls, and bingo halls may also be used, subject to a change of use application
- Walk around the area and look for likely vacant buildings, go in and ask if they are available or try to find out who owns them
- Check with local estate agents
- Go to your local main library
- Try to contact other voluntary or charitable bodies eg church, housing association or NHS Trust that may have redundant buildings in your area
- Also consider purchasing land for a purpose built facility
- Look into the possibility of leasing land from schools for example and having a 'Portakabin' on the site. There are now many companies who can provide specially designed modular units for nurseries. Contact local schools and find out whether they are amenable and know how much they might charge, Many will want to do this in partnership with childcare providers, so may be open to working with you.

Planning requirements

Planning permission is nearly always required and it is essential that you check with planning departments before purchasing or leasing. If you think planning permission will not be required, you should still check to verify that this is the case.

You will need planning permission if you intend to do the following:

- Erect a new building
- Change the use of a building to day nursery, crèche or playgroup
- Undertake external building work including extending existing buildings
- Carry out other works around the building, e.g. put up a children's playground or a 'Portakabin'.

Assessing your application

When assessing your application for a childcare provision, the following things will be taken into account by your local planning department;

Access/parking

Spaces will be needed for the dropping off and picking up of children by car and for delivery vehicles. Highways departments are consulted as part of the planning procedure and quite often lack of access/parking is the reason for applications being refused. Providing a 'travel plan' for staff and parents will help in the assessment process.

Surrounding neighbours – their views

While childcare provision may be encouraged in your area, neighbours' concern about children creating noise will be taken into account. The nearest neighbours to the property will be informed of your proposal and invited to comment on it. In residential areas be prepared for the possibility of resistance to your plans. Make sure you meet with your neighbours and talk through your plans before you submit your application to allay any concerns they may have.

Converting a house to a childcare provision

Larger residential properties, which by their position and design will cause fewer disturbances to neighbours, may be suitable premises to use as a day care. However, depending on the local authority, conversion of an entire house to childcare provision may be resisted, with insistence that part of the house remains residential. Other conversion conditions may include restrictions on the type and size of the house or number of childcare places. Some authorities will grant planning permission on a time-limited basis, so it can be reviewed and revoked if, for example, disturbance is caused to neighbours.

The local authority will expect that a high standard of design be used in all schemes that involve building works or alteration to a property. This is especially the case where windows may have to be lowered to enable children to see out.

Access into the building

Your local authority will probably be committed to the policy that all people shall have equal access and opportunity within their community.

Good access ensures that people are not excluded from using a building because of poor design. This is particularly relevant to a Provision where people will be bringing their children in prams and buggies and to disabled children and adults who will be using the facility. Parents, children and staff with disabilities will require appropriate means of access into and around the building. You should think about how to address the issue of equal access when converting your premises and make sure you check your responsibilities under the Disability Discrimination Act.

Conditions

Conditions are normally attached to all planning permissions. The examples given below are those most likely to be imposed on any granting of permission for childcare uses:

The planning department at your local authority will be able to advise about its criteria for planning approval. If planning permission is required and refused for any reason then the project cannot go ahead. An appeals procedure can be instigated, but seek advice about your chances of success before doing so. Also bear in mind that planning permission is just one of the permissions you will need before your Provision opens.

Types of provision

Full Daycare

These are nurseries or children's centres that operate for a continuous period of 4 hours or more in any day.

Sessional Daycare

This is a provision which offers children part-time care only. Sessions provided must be less than 4 hours long and where 2 sessions are offered in any one day, individual children must not attend for more than five sessions a week. There must be a break between sessions with no children in the care of the provider.

Crèches

These are facilities that provide occasional care for children. Some are in permanent premises, and care for children while parents are engaged in particular activities e.g. training or sports. Others are established on a temporary basis to care for children while their parents are involved in time limited activities, e.g. a conference or exhibition. They need to be registered

to run for more than 2 hours a day (even when individual children attend for shorter periods) or if they operate on particular premises on more than five days a year.

Out of School Care

This is care for children that is provided during one or more of the following:

- Before school
- After school
- During school holidays

This form of care can include children from 4 years old and children over 8 years of age.

Childminding

Childminders work in their own homes and can be registered to care for up to 6 children under the age of 8 years. They may offer either full-time or part-time care. Please contact the NCMA for further advice and support on childminding.

Ofsted Registration

Where to get the EYO pack?

On receipt of your application, Ofsted will acknowledge your application and send details of how to obtain disclosures from the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) for you and your staff. They will return the application if you have not provided sufficient details – this may delay the process.

Ofsted will expect you to contact the local fire authority to arrange an inspection. You must also ensure that you comply with the recommendations of the local planning department and building control and with environmental health requirements in order for Ofsted to register you. You should start your discussions with these departments as soon as possible. Keep a dialogue going with all concerned to avoid misunderstanding and costly delays. Information on Hounslow's environmental health department can be found at www.hounslow.gov.uk/food_safety

Ofsted will arrange for their inspector to visit to register you. The inspector will check your identity, CRB forms for the registered owner and the manager of the nursery, the premises and equipment you intend to use. The inspector will assess how many children you may register to care for and your suitability to provide daycare through an interview known as the 'suitable person interview.' Ofsted forms and guidance can be found in the following location;
<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/content/advancedsearch/summary?SearchText=registration+visit+&SearchSectionID=-1&SubTreeArray=84&SearchButton=Search>

The inspector will give you feedback before leaving and may also be able to tell you the registration recommendation – to register you as a daycare provider, to register you as a daycare provider only when you have completed any actions that are required or to refuse registration. You will have the right to object or appeal if you are refused registration.

The registration certificate is your proof of registration and you **must** receive this before you begin to provide daycare.

The process of Ofsted registration typically takes 26 weeks.

After your registration, an inspector will inspect the childcare you provide at a further inspection visit within 6 months of opening. The inspector checks whether you still meet the Welfare and Learning and Development requirements. The inspector will judge the quality of your provision and grade it as 'outstanding' 'good', 'satisfactory' or 'unsatisfactory'. Ofsted has produced guidance to help you prepare for inspection. Ofsted may visit at other times: to check if any actions given at inspection have been completed; to consider a request by you to change the conditions of registration; when changes to your provision are made, for example you have extended your premises; or as a result of a complaint about your provision.

Hounslow's Stages of Response (Once registered)

1. Childcare Officer sends out a Welcome Booklet. This booklet includes information about new settings Steps in Support from the Early Years and Childcare Service.
2. When the settings URN number has been received Early Years Advisory Team Leader asks:
 - Attached Early Years Adviser to contact new setting and explain next steps in this process and arranges a visit re. Statutory Learning and Development requirements. Early Years Adviser to complete a - Meeting the EYFS Learning and Development Requirements - visit form
 - Attached Early Years Adviser asks Childcare Officer to visit re. Statutory Welfare Requirements
Childcare officer to complete welfare section in Time for Reflection.
3. New settings attached Early Years Adviser asks Early Years S.E.N. Advisory Team Leader to arrange for a member of her team to visit and complete their checklist.
4. Reports to be sent to the setting when completed.
5. All 3 reports are brought to the next Setting Support Meeting and a decision made about joining the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership and access to Early Education Entitlement. (EEE)

6. Family Information Service and Parmjit Ghtoray (Early Years Entitlement Officer) are informed of Setting Support Meeting decisions by Early Years Advisory Team Leader.
7. Early Years Advisory Team Leader emails a letter to the setting about the decision made at the setting support meeting

The Early years Foundation Stage

Compliance with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is a statutory requirement for all Ofsted registered childcare providers and schools caring for children under the age of five. The EYFS replaced the Birth to Three Matters framework, Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage and the National Standards for Under 8's Day Care and Childminding, thus creating a single framework covering children from birth until the term after their fifth birthday.

You can download the EYFS pack at

<http://www.education.gov.uk/search/results?q=EYFS> which sets out the background and legal basis for the EYFS and the underpinning principles. The guidance differentiates between the learning and development and the welfare of young children and sets out requirements for each.

The learning and development requirements ensure that children acquire the knowledge and understanding, and develop the skills and processes that they need. Providers are required to make appropriate observations and assessments to determine the children's progress and next steps of learning. The welfare requirements of young children ensure that practitioners provide for the safety and wellbeing of the children in their care.

Safeguarding

As the registered provider, the owner, trustees or directors have a duty to protect the children from harm and abuse. Every provider is required to develop a safeguarding children and child protection policy using the government guidance 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' and 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2006). The registered provider must carry out CRB checks and assess the ongoing suitability of all adults that look after, or have unsupervised access to, the children to ensure that they are suitable to do so.

'What to do if you're Worried a Child is Being Abused' and 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2006) can be downloaded from the Every Child Matters website www.everychildmatters.gov.uk

Your early years philosophy and approach to children's learning will inform the way that you plan the Provision environment and resources. Provision needs to be appropriate to the age and stage of development of the children in the setting. Early Years Foundation Stage provides information about children's development, appropriate provision and play opportunities. If you are buying an existing day care provision, you will need to consider how you make changes to the provision environment so it reflects your philosophy and approach, and allow for the costs this will incur.

The Provision interior

Colour scheme

The colour scheme that you chose for the Provision will influence the atmosphere of the setting. Consider how it will feel to the people who will play, work in or visit the environment – children, staff and parents. Choose colours that will create a calm and pleasant atmosphere. Strong colours can sometimes over stimulate and make children aggressive or over excited.

The interior design

The Provision should be warm, welcoming and safe. The design of your interior environment should make best use of the space available. Consideration needs to be given to floor coverings – suitable for the age and activity, crawling or water play!

You will need to include a kitchen, laundry, staff room, office, (dependent on the type of environment), adult and children's toilets, facilities for changing nappies as well as for children's play. Consult with environmental health officials and implement the regulatory requirements.

You will also need plenty of storage. In areas used for the children you will need to consider how resources and play materials will be made accessible to children allowing for equality and providing children with choices.

You should consider what items of furniture you would need for storage, the office, kitchen and staff room. As well as this, you will need to acquire relevant pieces of play equipment. Seating will be needed for staff and children, to play, relax and for feeding babies. Cots and mattresses could be needed for children and babies to rest and sleep.

Storage

Storage is at a premium in childcare provisions. You will need to consider your resources and equipment and consider the most suitable type of storage facilities - cupboards, filing cabinets, storage boxes and kitchen units. Storage within play areas needs careful planning to avoid restricting play opportunities and accessibility and reduction in the numbers of children able to use the room. Shelving units that allow children to choose resources and materials can be used in play areas. Lockable storage must be provided to store cleaning and other harmful substances in accordance with the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) legislation. Lockable storage will also be necessary to ensure confidentiality of child and staff records and you should adhere to data protection legislation.

Safety

You will need to ensure the safety of children, staff and visitors to the premises, taking into consideration the security of the premises, both while occupied and unoccupied, access to the premises and layout, allowing for staff supervision equipment and resources. You will need to write a health and safety policy and conduct various risk assessments.

Along with the childcare regulatory standard, you need to be aware and implement the requirements of:

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and 2005
- Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998
- Toy (Safety) Regulations 1995
- COSHH Regulations 1999
- Fire Precautions Act 1971
- RIDDOR 1995
- Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981
- Food hygiene regulations

Equipping the Provision

Equipment should be of high quality to ensure its durability and safety. Where possible, children should be consulted over decisions about resources.

It is important that resources:

- Conform to European safety standards and display the CE mark or comply with British Safety standards or the Toy (Safety) Regulations 1995
- Are appropriate for the age and stage of development of the children for whom they are intended
- Promote children's development
- Provide play opportunities consistent current curriculum frameworks
- Are consistent with your nursery's philosophy
- Promote equality and diversity

- Include equipment made of natural as well as man-made materials.

When choosing resources consult with childcare professionals; research carefully in order to see examples of good practice. Shop around, there are many suppliers and prices vary enormously. Some suppliers provide bespoke and specialised advice on planning the environment and choosing resources.

Creative materials

Creative activities help:

- Develop children's creativity and imagination
- Promote physical development, both gross and fine motor
- Promote emotional, social, language and cognitive development.

You should include materials for various methods of painting, collage, and modelling and mark-making appropriate to the age and stage of development of the child. Malleable materials such as play-dough and clay and equipment for moulding and modelling them should also be provided. You should provide materials that can be used both two and three dimensionally. A wealth of consumable resources can be found for free or inexpensively.

Sand and water

Sand and water play provide children with opportunities for experimenting and help children to formulate and test out many mathematical and scientific concepts. They promote all areas of children's development.

Construction

Construction materials are important for children's developing understanding of maths, particularly spatial awareness and science. They promote physical development; both fine and gross motor skills, social development in terms of co-operation and language development.

You should consider offering both large and small construction opportunities. These include building toys and blocks as well as found materials such as cardboard boxes. Woodworking materials and equipment also provide positive play experiences for children.

Imaginative play

Imaginative play allows children to assume a variety of roles and is important for development of imagination and language. It promotes social and emotional development in terms of developing social skills including co-operation.

Basic provision of familiar home/domestic equipment should be supplemented with other situation props such as would be found in a hospital, vet's practice,

post office, a cafe/restaurant, travel agent and hairdresser etc. The areas should be changed in response to children's interests.

Literacy and books

Creating an inviting book area, accessible books, both fiction and non-fiction, and comfortable seating where children can read alone and share books with adults will encourage children to develop an interest in books and will support the development of literacy. Puppets, finger puppets and other resources to illustrate stories will enhance the area.

Literacy can also be promoted by including appropriate books in other areas of the Provision, and also by including mark-marking opportunities in all areas.

Music

A variety of instruments can be provided and many can be made inexpensively from found materials. Opportunities to create music, dance and use actions to show sound and rhythm promote physical, language and emotional development. They exercise children's memory and develop their listening skills and can also help in developing mathematical concepts e.g. by listening to musical sequences and patterns.

Information and Communication technology (ICT)

Very young children learn best through first hand experiences and will not need regular access to computers. Over threes will benefit by using computers in a variety of ways, e.g. for drawing, word processing, finding information on a CD Rom, using a scanner and a digital camera, sending emails and printing.

All areas

Small world (animals, people and vehicles) and mark-marking materials can be provided in all areas to enhance play opportunities.

Outside play

This area is essential for providing opportunities for physical, gross motor development. You should provide equipment appropriate for the age of the children but which will provide them with challenges including climbing and balancing. Consideration should be given to ensuring there is enough space for running, hopping and jumping.

Found materials such as tyres and crates make effective and inexpensive resources. Fabric and parachutes have many uses and are invaluable.

The outdoor space should provide an extension of the indoor provision and can also offer opportunities for sand, water, construction, creative and imaginative play opportunities.

Baby toys

Equipment for babies should promote physical development and provide opportunities for crawling, shuffling, pulling to standing and climbing. Ramps, small steps and tunnels can be provided. Babies beginning to develop a concept of themselves and others should have mirrors to explore their own reflections.

It is good practice to include heuristic play opportunities. This comprises natural materials in a 'treasure basket' for babies to explore and experience.

Opportunities for babies to experience different textures including paint (finger and feet – whole bodies!), water and sand should also be provided.

Out of school

Equipment and resources for children and young people in out of school provision will include the areas previously mentioned, but needs to be appropriate for their age and stage of development.

Children and young people should be consulted about play opportunities, resources and equipment provided for them.

Using resources

Good quality play opportunities and experiences for children/young people are dependent on qualified and experienced staff that interact effectively with children/young people. Observation of children/young people in order to understand what they know and can do and to identify their interest enables staff to intervene appropriately to scaffold children/young people's learning and to make best use of resources.

Employing people

One of the most challenging areas for anyone starting or running a childcare business is the area of employing people. Well-qualified, enthusiastic and caring staff are strong selling points for a Provision and in today's climate increasingly difficult to find. Therefore, getting the recruitment process right to create your ideal team requires careful planning.

Analysing the job

The first steps to recruiting the right people consists of analysing jobs, composing the job descriptions, compiling person specifications and ensuring that your team satisfies the legal requirement for working in this area, whilst in the process avoiding any form of discrimination.

Qualifications and staff ratios

Under the regulatory standards for the registration of childcare specific staff ratios must be observed:

Ratios

- 1:3 for children 0-2 years
- 1:4 for children aged 2 years
- 1:8 for children aged 3-7 years
- 50% of staff should be qualified to a minimum of Level 2 NVQ in early years care and education
- The person in charge of day-to-day childcare should have a minimum of Level 3 early years care and education (or equivalent qualifications appropriate to the post) and a minimum of two years' experience.
- The proprietor(s), committee or company directors are *not required* to have any particular childcare qualifications or experience

There are additional requirements to be observed for care of babies under two years:

- 50% of staff caring for babies have received training in this specific area
- The person in charge of the baby room has suitable experience of working with children under two years.

In addition to formal qualifications, today's childcarer needs to develop good interpersonal skills including communication, relationship building, team working and, for many, leadership.

At the job analysis stage you need to find out as much as possible about the role you have to offer such as:

- The overall purpose
- The objectives
- Type (is it temporary, permanent, full-time or part-time)
- The position, the level of seniority, colleagues, subordinates and other departments which the post holder will interact with on an occasional or regular basis
- The level and amount of interaction with other individuals and agencies eg parents, health workers, schools, training providers such as basic

skills and the community. This will be particularly relevant for an integrated 'children's centre' approach to your service.

Composing the job descriptions

The next step after job analysis is to compose your job description for the vacancy. In the recruitment and selection process, job descriptions have three main uses:

- To provide further information needed in determining the selection criteria
- To inform applicants about the job
- To ensure that new recruits to your team understand the primary purpose and principal functions of the job and its place in the structure of your provision.

The job description is also a useful source of reference when composing the advertisement or application forms, as it will indicate the points that need to be emphasised and questions that need to be asked as appropriate. Copies of it can be sent with application forms so that prospective candidates can decide whether or not the job is for them.

The precise format that your job description will take will vary from organisation to organisation and according to the complexity of the role. However, the following should be included as a minimum:

- Job title
- Objectives of the role
- Reporting relationships
- Principal duties and responsibilities
- Unspecified duties.

Other matters that might be included are:

- Salary
- Location
- Job dimensions
- Practical requirements.

Compiling the personnel specification

The personnel specification sets out the skills, knowledge and experience to perform a particular job properly. The personnel specification is perhaps most useful during the recruitment process as it will help to decide where to look for the ideal employee for your team. You can refer to it when drawing up

advertisements and it is particularly useful for drawing up a shortlist of potential candidates. At the interview it can be used as a checklist of points to be covered, discussed or points to be raised. For equal opportunities, you should consider how the role could be performed whilst allowing for flexible working or part-time options e.g. job shares.

It will normally cover areas such as the following:

- Education/qualifications
- Childcare knowledge/skills/abilities
- Personality
- Experience
- Interests
- General circumstances.

It is good practice to separate out the chosen attributes into essentials and desirables that can be easily measured and assessed.

Looking for applicants

Now that you have drafted your job description you are ready to begin the search for your new team member. The search for staff can take a number of routes. The end of the academic year is a good time to recruit staff with both initial and advanced level qualifications. Advice and support can be obtained through your local authority's recruitment officer – Nicola West – by calling 020 8583 2635 or by emailing Nicola.west@hounslow.gov.uk

Potential sources of recruitment include:

- Jobcentre Plus
- Careers guidance
- Specialist recruitment agencies
- Local authority/Early Years departments
- Advertising in sector magazines such as Provision World and in local newspapers
- Colleges and universities
- Local training providers e.g. via local Learning and Skills Councils
- Attending any local recruitment fairs that may be organised by your local authority.

Whatever your chosen medium, advertisements must be based on the respective job description and person specification, so that readers of the advert know what is involved and precisely who is wanted. Adverts need to be eye catching, brief, straightforward and non-discriminatory. To attract candidates you should make sure you portray what you can offer them as an

employer, not just what you want from them. Consider the impact your advertisement will have on potential recruits and use it to demonstrate the benefits of joining your organisation.

Contents of typical advertisement are:

- Business logo
- The job title
- The job location
- Tasks and responsibilities
- Job prospects
- Salary and benefits
- The person required, including essential and desirable qualities
- How to apply
- Who to apply to
- Where to apply to
- When to apply by.

Gathering the evidence and preparing a shortlist

An effective form of screening is required to guarantee success at this stage. Screening methods vary but the common ones involve the use of an application form or CV. When choosing a particular method it may be worth considering what you may want as a recruiter.

Producing application forms gives you the opportunity to state what you want to ask in the form, such as information about previous employment. The application form also provides a standardised format for the presentation of information and enables all applicants to be screened against similar information.

CVs on the other hand come in a variety of formats and pertinent questions or issues may not be adequately addressed by the applicant or omitted altogether. Furthermore, their lack of standardisation may hinder effective comparison at the short-listing stage.

If your advert is successful you will have a fair number of applications and can then begin the selection process by short-listing candidates to invite to interview. The short listing should be done with reference to the person specification and only candidates that fit the specification short-listed. You may wish to have more than one person short listing and interviewing, particularly for more senior roles.

Interviewing candidates

Good selection interviewing involves planning. You should write to short-listed applicants specifying the date and time of the interview and include adequate information about the organisation e.g. Provision brochure and map to the interview venue.

Make decisions about the structure, length, time, and type of interview. Consider the types of questions to ask and the manner in which they should be asked. Preparing a standard list of questions enables candidates to be treated fairly and enables you to compare and contrast the various responses. You need to be aware of the type of questions you ask. Closed questions – those that can be answered with a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ can be used for checking facts; open questions – often beginning with ‘why’, ‘what’, ‘how’ or ‘when’ – will prompt interviewees to talk about a topic in depth. Organise the layout of the interview room so that it is comfortable and have arrangements made about how to receive candidates and to limit interruptions when the interview is underway.

Directing the interview

Aim at the beginning of an interview to ensure that both interviewer and interviewees are as prepared and as relaxed as possible. Establish a rapport early on.

Each and every interview should follow a flexible plan where areas covering the organisation, the job, education, experience, skills, interests, general circumstances, health and aspirations are explored. A variety of questions need to be asked in order to obtain the necessary information, it is worthwhile supplementing your standard list with a few more searching questions.

End the interview correctly. Candidates should be given the chance to ask questions and to spend some time in the Provision with the children and staff. Round the interview off in a friendly manner, be sure not to indicate success or failure, but do let interviewees know when they can expect your decision.

Choosing your new team member

Make your decisions after the interviews have concluded. All information accumulated can then be compared and contrasted with the requirements for the job. Identify a first choice candidate and keep a few in reserve just in case your choice first turns out to be unsuitable or turns you down. Any remaining candidates should be politely rejected and you should be prepared to give feedback if candidates ask why they have been unsuccessful.

References

Use a reference request form that asks specific questions about reliability, skills as well as general details about the candidate’s history. It is usual to request two references, one from a previous employer and the other from a personal referee. You may wish to seek further clarification, for example, if a reference is ambiguous, you could telephone a previous employer (remember to ask for the applicant’s permission to do this).

Ofsted will carry out checks on the registered Provision owner and manager. However as part of their inspection, an Ofsted inspector can also check that a Provision is properly vetting their staff.

It is the manager's responsibility to see a CRB disclosure on individuals employed since April 2002. Any new staff who have not been cleared prior to starting work must be supervised at all times until clearance is received.

Making the offer

An offer of a job can be made by telephone or in writing and it is prudent to make the offer conditional for example, upon the receipt of satisfactory references, health and police checks and proof of relevant qualifications. Once the offer has been accepted and conditions met, the reserves can now be told they have been unsuccessful.

A contract of employment will exist legally as soon as the employee starts work. The terms and conditions of this contract should be confirmed in writing at this stage to avoid any potential confusion for employee or employer.

Induction

A well thought out induction for your new recruit will help him or her settle into the new role and become an effective member of your team. Typically an induction will last a set period of time, up to three months, with regular review meetings set within that time. To help your new staff member settle in, you may wish to assign them a mentor – a colleague who can help guide and advise them through their induction and beyond.

A typical induction programme will include:

- Greeting recruit on arrival
- Tour of organisation
- Introduction to the rest of the team
- Familiarisation with policies and procedures, health and safety and roles and responsibilities of all staff
- Shadowing an existing member of staff in a similar role
- Attempting job role
- Review
- A checklist should be signed to ensure that essential information has been given. Producing a staff handbook that contains all this information can be a useful approach
- It is best practice to ensure that all new staff are aware of and understand the nursery's policies and procedures, particular those

relating to health and safety and child protection, within their first fortnight of employment.

Complying with employment law

Understanding and complying with various employment laws is an essential part of the Provision owner/manager's role. Legislation dictating minimum wage rates, hours of work and parental leave has made the legal framework for employment even more challenging. You will be obliged to provide a written statement of employment terms, operate PAYE, pay Tax Credits such as the Working Families Tax Credit and Disabled Person's Tax Credit and provide a written health and safety policy.

Various Acts have been passed that prohibit unlawful discrimination with regard to sex, race or disability in recruitment and employment. Good quality childcare provision should be staffed to reflect the ethnic mix and diversity of the community it serves. ACAS can advise you on your legal obligations.

Income tax, national insurance

SSP, SMP, PAYE, for employees and directors of limited companies, Class 2 and Class 4 for owners operating as sole traders and partnerships. Corporation tax as appropriate for limited companies. working families' tax credits or disabled person's tax credit.

Employers are responsible for administration since April 2000.

Stakeholder pensions

Employers of five or more staff will need to provide a stakeholder pension or access to a recognised alternative scheme. National Day Nurseries Association operates a recognised scheme for Provision providers (see appendix 2 - useful contacts).

Employment rights

All employers need to be conversant with legislation that surrounds the employment of others. Equal opportunities issues feature highly. It is an area with implications throughout your Provision and important for satisfying registration requirements.

Legislation for this area includes:

- Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006
- Disability Discrimination Acts 1995 and 2005
- Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003
- Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003
- National Minimum Wage 1998
- Equal Pay Act 1970

- Race Relations Act 1976
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- Working Time Regulations.

Staff appraisals

As an employer, you should have systems in place for appraising staff. The system you develop should give you and your staff an opportunity to:

- Review their overall performance during a given period of time and provide useful feedback
- Ensure that mutual understanding of the objectives of the post and its requirements still exists
- Establish individual goals, aspirations and future training needs.

Of course, all measures need to be set within context of what your childcare business can afford but ensuring that your staff understand that you care about them and are prepared to invest in their careers is paramount. New providers can feel assured by the knowledge that they need not face these challenges on their own. Support is available via local authorities and childcare organisations.

Staff retention

Many provisions are finding the retention of good staff a continual pressure. Issues include newly trained staff leaving for higher salaries, a lack of experienced qualified staff and general dissatisfaction with pay.

Paying staff the salary they deserve, at a rate that will attract them to your Provision in the first place and keep them, is difficult due to the reliance of the provisions budget coming mainly from parents being able to afford your fees. This is a very difficult issue to solve.

Below are a few suggestions to aid staff retention:

- Explain from the beginning the relationship between fee income and salary scales
- Encourage a culture within the Provision whereby all staff members feel able to contribute ideas to the day to day running of the provision, the marketing etc, so that they feel valued
- Continually staff morale by treating all staff with respect, providing positive feedback regularly and encouraging the team to spend quality social time together outside working hours

- Link annual pay increases or an annual bonus to any increased fee income. This means that all or none of the staff will receive additional money and therefore will not lead to a decline in staff morale if only certain members of the team were to receive a bonus

Support wherever possible the staff's training needs. Work with the staff to identify any training needs and how this training can be accessed. Hounslow Early Years & Childcare service also have a training team who can be contacted on 020 8583 2735.

Marketing

Marketing in simple terms is the process of continually identifying your customers and satisfying their needs. To succeed in today's dynamic childcare market you need to apply this principle to your childcare business in a way that will help you to achieve a profitable result.

Marketing basics

- Offer a service that meets customer expectations
- Target your customers
- Implementing your marketing strategies

How to determine the marketing basics

Think back to your market research. By now you have already worked out who the customers are in your local market, familiarised yourself with the offerings of the competition and have a good idea of the type of service that you want to offer and how to differentiate it from the other players in your target market. Now all you have to do is re-package that information so that it expresses what your organisation is all about.

It makes good sense to promote your business's individual qualities, however try not to criticise other provision, as it will create ill feeling. By forming local networks to ensure proper representation at local and national level, you will benefit from networking support.

The marketing plan

The marketing plan is a statement of intent. It will involve the Provision management team and identify who does what, how and by when. The plan should include market research details and assumptions, quantify the costs associated with any campaign and include a mechanism for reviewing its impact.

What does the marketing plan contain?

Summary	Complete overview that gives readers a good idea of the contents of the plan.
Marketing objectives	A statement of the objectives to be achieved.
Marketing characteristics	Details of the characteristics of your market i.e. competition, services, propensity to buy.
Customers	Customers characteristics including demographics, socio-economic, usage rate, motive for choosing a nursery, benefits sought.
Competition	Details of other providers, strengths, weaknesses and reaction so you know whom you are up against and how to differentiate yourself.
Product/service position	The strategy for positioning and communicating your service to your customers. Stated in terms that your customer understands.
Selling/communication plan	Who is responsible for selling the service and how it is going to be done.
Timetable	Details of timing for all this.
Responsibilities	This sets out who must do what by when . This section serves as a useful tool for monitoring progress.
Budget	Looks at the cost of the intended action as well as the financial outcomes i.e. return on expenditure in terms of profit.

Tried and tested tactics for marketing your nursery

Brochure

Put a brochure together so that you can use it to promote your service. The brochure could have the structure below. Fees have not been included, because to save costs you may want to have more brochures produced than you actually need in any one year. It makes sense to put fees on an inserted sheet.

Open day

Have an open day to publicise the opening of your Provision and what you have to offer. Invite a local dignitary such as the mayor or your MP to create a photo opportunity at the event. Notify the local press and get them to send a photographer at the very least. A photo opportunity is a wonderful way of getting some free publicity for your nursery. Remember to invite local Childcare Providers and staff, and local school headteachers and other local Provision owners and managers – this will help you build links.

Leaflet drop

Target the following places and distribute information about the nursery: antenatal clinics, hospitals, doctors' surgeries, parent/toddler groups, schools, Children's Centres, social services and education departments, Family Information Service, universities and colleges, professional journals and free newspapers.

Word of mouth

Don't forget word of mouth. This is by far the most effective way for Early Years Provision to obtain customers. The open day will kick-start the word of mouth process, but there are other methods you can use to involve parents in the Provision and get them talking about your service in a positive way. Prepare a newsletter to provide news to parents about the Provision and their children's development and time in the nursery. Include photos of the children at play – make sure you have the written permission of parents to do this. Organise events that parents can attend, use these occasions to learn more about parents' needs and to promote your services.

Networking

The detailed research conducted at the start of your Provision project should have generated a substantial network of contacts eg parents, schools, local authority, local employers and health visitors. Use this network to cascade information about your new nursery.

Generate your own press coverage

Cultivate good links with your local press; let them know whenever you have a special event or success story to shout about. Successful marketing is a continuous process and your techniques for promoting your Provision will evolve over time. Set targets for raising and maintaining your profile and constantly review your marketing plan to ensure your objectives are achieved.

Advertising

Advertising provides a number of benefits including raising awareness about the services/events you offer helps to persuade parents to use your Provision and reinforces your existence when repeat advertising is used.

There are many places that offer suitable advertising including local newspapers, local schools, interest group magazines, residents' magazines etc. Sometimes advertising is free however it can also be quite costly.

Managing the provision

It is an essential part of the registration and inspection process that providers demonstrate they have certain mechanisms in place to ensure the effective and efficient management.

The first of these mechanisms is ensuring development of appropriate policies and procedures that will enable the Provision to comply with Welfare and the learning and development requirements. Policies are the cornerstone of Provision management. They encompass the beliefs and values of your nursery, conveying the ethos of how you deliver your childcare and early years service.

Procedures state clearly the course of action to be taken in a given situation. This will ensure that childcare practice is consistent throughout the Provision and that clear standards of practice are upheld.

Another obvious and very important feature of the Provision business is that it is very people orientated. For Provision owners this immediately has legal obligations around the care and development of those in their employment. The provider bears the responsibility for ensuring that a prospective employee fits the legal requirements for working in the sector. They also have a duty to ensure that staff are working in a safe environment and that their training and professional development needs are met.

This area is of particular importance because of the massive expansion in the childcare industry over recent years and the need to raise levels of skills and qualifications. Try to investigate what kind of support may be available from your local authority.