

# RCT CHILDCARE TEAM NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 10 • FEBRUARY 2025

## HELLO AND WELCOME

TO THE SPRING EDITION OF OUR NEWSLETTER.

Included is exciting information about our Celebration Event as well as responses to our satisfaction survey sent out to you all in the Autumn term. As always, please get in touch if you have any queries or suggestions for future additions.

## Celebration Event

Join us at the **YMa** in Pontypridd on **Saturday 29 March** to celebrate the valuable work you all do to support children and families in RCT.

There will be lots of information from umbrella organisations and partners, such as Flying Start, at the event and we will be updating you on everything that the sector has achieved in the last year, as well as our plans for 2025/26. However, the main event will be our awards ceremony. Over the last few months, parents and settings have been busy nominating their favourites in a number of categories, including Excellent Outdoor Provision and Childcare Leader of the Year.

We hope you can join us for what will be a lovely event. To book your place go to: <https://customerportal.rctcbc.gov.uk/5266>



Mae'r ddogfen yma ar gael yn y Gymraeg / This document is available in Welsh.



# Childcare team update

The childcare development team are busy with their one to one business health checks. These are proving popular. Even if settings are not reporting any issues, feedback so far is that they are a nice way to get to know the team better. We will be continuing to visit as many settings through the Spring and Summer terms as possible, so please be patient and we will be in contact as soon as possible. If you would like a visit sooner rather than later, let us know and we will try our best to fit you in.

The final updates for the CSA action plan 24/25 are being completed at the moment. Work will then start on identifying priorities for the 25/26 financial year. The focus is likely to remain on supporting the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) and the expansion of the Flying Start programme. Workforce development is also high on our list of priorities and we are continuing to promote childcare as a career and forging links with schools and colleges. For more information, go to [www.rctcbc.gov.uk/csa](http://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/csa).

We are continuing to visit parent groups to give information to parents about the Childcare Offer, how to become a childminder or to signpost them to other family related services. We are always keen to visit new groups, so if you run a P&T/Ti a Fi group, please get in touch and we will add you to our schedule.



## Training

Over the next year we will be teaming up with colleagues in other departments to create one training schedule that includes all training available to practitioners in RCT. This will hopefully help you choose the training courses that best suit your setting.

All mandatory training will remain on offer such as Paediatric First Aid (6 hour and 12 hour), Safeguarding Group B and C, food safety and manual handling. Further information and details of the training available will be released in early April 2025. Please keep on eye on our Facebook group and your emails to check availability and how to book.

We are no longer using Eventbrite for bookings and all our training courses can now be accessed at <https://customerportal.rctcbc.gov.uk/article/5168/Events>. Remember to let us know as soon as possible if you have booked training places but are no longer able to attend, as we can then offer that place to someone else. Non-attendance has improved but still does cause some issues. We would like to remind you if learners from your setting do not attend, without exceptional circumstances, all staff from the setting they work within will be unable to access any training offered by the childcare team for a period of two months.

Also, remember that some courses run over more than one session. To complete the course, it is vital that you attend all sessions. Please notify the childcare team as soon as possible if the staff member attending is different to the staff member originally booked onto the session, as this will affect certification if we are not made aware of the change.

If you would like more information on our training courses or have any comments about our training programme, contact us at [childcareteam@rctcbc.gov.uk](mailto:childcareteam@rctcbc.gov.uk).



# Provider satisfaction survey

Our annual provider satisfaction survey was conducted in the Autumn term. Just over 30% of all CIW registered providers responded, which is a disappointing number. However, if you didn't have the chance to complete the survey and would like to give us any feedback on our service or what you need from us, please contact us directly.

Childminders were the highest childcare type to respond (49.1%) followed by Full Day Care (30.9%) then Sessional Care (18.2%).

Nearly all respondents were registered to deliver the Childcare Offer (96.4%) with 32.7% registered to deliver Flying Start and 27.3% approved non-maintained education providers. It was encouraging to see that 90.9% of respondents are registered for Tax Free Childcare.

We encourage all providers to register for this scheme by registering at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/sign-up-to-tax-free-childcare-if-youre-a-childcare-provider>.  
Thank you for to those that responded for your comments on the issues you are facing and how you feel we are supporting you. Below is a roundup of the main feedback received.

Survey comments	Response
Support from team	
Childcare team don't reach out to us to offer support. I don't feel we have much communication from the Childcare team.	The childcare development team tries to engage with childcare providers in a number of ways. As well as posting information on our Facebook page and sending via email, we are currently conducting 1:1 business health check visits, we are hosting a provider celebration event in March 2025 and we post these newsletters to every childcare setting in RCT at least twice per year! In the past we have delivered provider engagement events, both face to face and online, coffee mornings, both of which had limited numbers attending. Because our emails are sent via Family Information Service, it may not be obvious that they are off us. Anything from the childcare development team will have our rainbow logo on it. If you have any suggestions on how we can improve our communication with the sector, please let us know.
Support visits would be helpful.	We are currently undertaking visits with all CIW registered settings so you can meet the team and we can discuss any issues or support you may need at this time. At the time of publication, we have been to visit half of all settings in RCT, with the rest planned over the next few months.
Local childminders meeting, once a month?	The childcare team has explored setting up local networks in the past. Despite some enthusiasm from childminders at the time, these groups did not take off in the way we hoped. If you would like our support to set up your own group in your area, please get in touch with us.
Funded Schemes	
Raise hourly rate for Childcare Offer and Flying Start in line with inflation and rising costs.	The rate for the Childcare Offer for Wales is set by Welsh Government and completely beyond our control. The Flying Start rate is set according to the funding received by Welsh Government and again is limited according to the level of this funding. The childcare team understand the issues settings are facing at the moment and do feed back your concerns to Welsh Government at every opportunity. We are limited to what we can do to help financially, but we do offer support via funded training courses, business health checks and New/Expansion of Provision and Financial Hardship grants.
To allow parents to access Childcare Offer as soon as their child turns 3 not have to wait till the term following 3rd birthday.	The Childcare Offer for Wales is a Welsh Government scheme and they set the eligibility criteria. We have no control over the age restrictions to this scheme.
A lot of duplication between various requirements of FS, CO and REP. As most settings are already CIW registered, is this level of scrutiny and duplication appropriate? More co-ordination between the schemes would be good.	Flying Start, Childcare Offer for Wales and non-maintained nursery education are all Welsh Government schemes that have distinct aims and objectives, and different criteria for eligibility. RCTCBC administers these schemes on behalf of WG and has no control over the requirements needed.

## Training

<b>More training in evenings and at weekends.</b>	All training offered by the childcare team is during the evenings or on Saturdays. Other teams, such as Flying Start, the non-maintained education team and Access & Inclusion offer some training during weekdays. Usually this cannot be avoided due to trainer availability etc. We are currently working with other teams to combine our training schedules, to ensure there is no duplication and a wide range of days and times available to suit all settings.
<b>Recorded training to access at convenient times.</b>	This is not possible for the vast majority of the courses we offer, as they require participation from attendees. However, we are looking to record sessions where possible, such as the Health & Safety briefing we ran a few months ago. Further information will be available when possible.
<b>Manager to enrol staff onto courses to ensure staff sign up to training.</b>	Managers are able to enrol their staff onto funded training. However, they must give us the individual staff member's email address so that the attendee can receive all the information and be fully aware that they have been booked onto courses.
<b>Other training needs - advice on promotion, business planning, writing a good business plan, tax, funding and grants available. Play training, Alice Sharp, risky play, New curriculum for Wales.</b>	The childcare development team has offered some of the CPD training mentioned in the past with limited take up of places. Our funding priorities are to offer mandatory training, but we will look at these suggestions and try to include some in the next financial year. Further information will be sent to you when available.
<b>Offer more training on additional needs, one person profiles, behaviour management, supporting non mobile children, ADHD, BSL, Makaton.</b>	The Access & Inclusion team offer a wide range of training for settings to support children with additional needs. The new combined training calendar will hopefully make this easier to see and book onto.
<b>It may be nice to have emails with regards to courses that are on offer.</b>	All training provided by the childcare development team is emailed to providers via the Family Information Service. If you do not have an active account on the DEWIS database, you will not receive these emails. We also advertise our training on our provider Facebook page (see details below).

## Grants

<b>Small resource packs / grants. To purchase items not available via small capital grant.</b>	Following the COVID pandemic, additional funding was made available which we used to offer resource packs to providers. These were very popular. Unfortunately, we do not have sufficient funding currently to offer these packs again. However, we are actively looking at ways to secure funding to offer resource grants, particularly those that support children with emerging needs. More information will be sent to you if we can secure additional funding.
<b>Hardship grants.</b>	The childcare team offer Financial Hardship grants for settings that are at imminent risk of closure. For more information contact us <a href="mailto:childcareteam@rctcbc.gov.uk">childcareteam@rctcbc.gov.uk</a> .
<b>Funding towards the purchase of a suitable work car/vehicle.</b>	Each Local Authority in Wales has created their own Childcare & Early Years Small Capital grant scheme, within the parameters set by the Welsh Government guidance. Therefore some LA's do allow the purchase of vehicles as part of this scheme. RCT decided not to allow applications for the purchase of work vehicles for several reasons: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concerns raised by other departments in the Council highlighted concerns regarding the Council's liability towards any vehicles funded by us.</li> <li>• Our environmental targets mean that we would only be able to fund electric vehicles, which may increase the costs beyond the maximum levels of funding available.</li> <li>• Most vehicles are traditionally purchased on finance arrangements and the Council would not be able to reimburse the purchase costs if a vehicle was purchased in this way.</li> </ul>
<b>Funding to make improvements to the setting and to obtain better quality resources. With support and clear guidance on how to apply and the process. Also to ensure the system and procedures are not overcomplicated.</b>	The Childcare & Early Years Small Capital grant is available for settings to make improvements to their buildings and to purchase high quality capital resources. Although it may seem that we ask for a lot of information, audit requirements mean that we have to ensure that any works are completed by qualified, competent contractors and that only resources of high value / high quality are purchased. We are also bound by the Welsh Government guidance for this scheme which requires us to have due diligence when assessing and approving applications. We work each year to refine the guidance and application process to make it as clear as possible. If you have any feedback on how you think we could make this process easier please email <a href="mailto:rctchildcaregrants@rctcbc.gov.uk">rctchildcaregrants@rctcbc.gov.uk</a> .



# Cynnig Gofal Plant Cymru Childcare Offer for Wales

The dates for our provider refresher training are below. These informal sessions cover the main issues that arise for parents and providers with the national system. They will also give you the chance to ask the team questions. They really are a valuable resource if you are unsure about any aspect of the national system.

Date	Time	Book place
Friday 04 April 2025	1.30pm-2.30pm	<a href="https://customerportal.rctcbc.gov.uk/5211">https://customerportal.rctcbc.gov.uk/5211</a>
Tuesday 10 June 2025	6.00pm-7.00pm	
Wednesday 16 July 2025	10.30am-11.30am	

Remember, if you are hosting any events, we are happy to attend to promote the Childcare Offer to your parents. Also, if you need any more posters or flyers, just email: [childcareofferproviders@rctcbc.gov.uk](mailto:childcareofferproviders@rctcbc.gov.uk).

## One Login

The way you and your parents log into the national system will be changing over the next few months. Welsh Government are moving from **Government Gateway** login to **One Login**. Keep an eye out for more information soon.

# ALN

Access & Inclusion offer a regular programme of ALN training and support events. Email [AandIService@rctcbc.gov.uk](mailto:AandIService@rctcbc.gov.uk) to book your place.

Any queries regarding the training, email [Suzanne.Davidson@rctcbc.gov.uk](mailto:Suzanne.Davidson@rctcbc.gov.uk) or [Luci.Hooper@rctcbc.gov.uk](mailto:Luci.Hooper@rctcbc.gov.uk) before booking.

Training	Who for?	Venue	Date & Time
ALN Drop-ins	ALNCo's / setting staff	TEAMS Online	<b>Spring Term 2025:</b> 28.03.2025 <b>Summer Term 2025:</b> 02.05.2025   06.06.2025   11.07.2025
EY ALNCo Forum	ALNCo's	TEAMS Online	<b>Spring Term 2025:</b> 03.04.2025 (1.30-2.30) <b>Summer Term 2025:</b> 22.05.2025 (1.30-2.30)   26.06.2025 (1.30-2.30)
ALN Strategies	All staff	In person training (venues to be confirmed)	<b>Spring Term 2025:</b> 19.03.2025 (9.30-11.30), (1.30-3.30) & (6.00-8.00) <b>Summer Term 2025:</b> 11.06.2025 (9.30-11.30), (1.30-3.30) & (6.00-8.00)
Inclusive Environments & Universal Provision	All staff ALNCOs and Leaders	Cynon Suite, Valleys Innovation Centre, Abercynon.	<b>Summer Term 2025:</b> 09.07.2025 (9.00-12.00) & (1.00-4.00)



# Family Information Service

If you don't keep your DEWIS account up to date and active, you'll miss out on all the information and emails sent out by our team. You'll also miss out on **FREE** advertising to parents who use the FIS database to search for childcare in their area.

To register or sign in to your account, use this link:

**<https://www.dewis.wales/secure/login.aspx>**

If you have any questions or need assistance with your DEWIS account, please email: **[fis@rctcbc.gov.uk](mailto:fis@rctcbc.gov.uk)**

## Facebook

Our Facebook page continues to grow. It is the ideal way to receive the latest news from the team and other partners.

### To join, go to...

**<https://www.facebook.com/groups/childcareteamRCT>** or search for **RCT Childcare Team** in the Facebook search facility.



If you no longer wish to receive these newsletters, please let us know and we will take you off our distribution list.

## Contact Us ...

### Childcare Development team:



01443 570048



**[www.rctcbc.gov.uk/childcareteam](http://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/childcareteam)**



**[childcareteam@rctcbc.gov.uk](mailto:childcareteam@rctcbc.gov.uk)**



**RCT Childcare Team**

### Childcare Offer team:



03000 628628



**[www.rctcbc.gov.uk/childcareoffer](http://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/childcareoffer)**



**[childcareofferproviders@rctcbc.gov.uk](mailto:childcareofferproviders@rctcbc.gov.uk)**



Mae croeso i chi gyfathrebu â ni yn y Gymraeg  
You are welcome to communicate with us in Welsh.