

Starfish Daycare Fees during the Corona-crisis

The UK Government is continuing to fund nursery provision for children from the term after their third birthday as well as the additional 15 hours of care (so called, 30-hour provision). They are also funding 2-year-provision (15 hours for eligible children). These continuing funding streams will help, but, our setting relies upon parental contributions for the majority of its costs. Due to our setting being based at a school, we do not qualify, through the government scheme, for business-rate-relief. It would seem that this is the trigger for accessing other business continuity grants and wage support, so we are expecting not to qualify for these either. We are currently hoping to maintain staff but obviously this will add to our deficit. In light of this we have come up with the following plan relating to fees:

- Where children of critical workers to the Covid-19 response continue to access the setting, regardless of whether their hours during the crisis are more or less than usual, we will take receipt of the normal fees that they pay.
- Where children of critical workers are no longer accessing the setting, we will not expect payment in line with our contracts. However, where possible we would ask that families who are continuing to receive their usual wage, contribute to the setting in some form so that when this is over there will still be a setting to which children can return.
- For children of other workers, no longer able to access the setting, we will not expect payment in line with our contracts. However, where possible we would ask that families who are continuing to receive their usual wage, contribute to the setting in some form so that when this is over there will still be a setting to which children can return. Obviously where families are currently not receiving a wage or are receiving less than their usual wage through one of the government or company schemes we do not expect contributions.
- Where children accessing the setting require breakfast, tea-time or wrap-around care we will continue to collect fees as usual. We will also be able to offer lunches at the usual cost in forthcoming weeks. (We will let those accessing the setting know when this becomes available.)

We will record all payments and contributions made during this period and if further schemes become available to support settings like ours, we will reimburse payments.

It is very difficult, after struggling for 14 years to make a go of a unique provision both in Hartlepool and in the region, and most especially when we have watched similar settings close because the difficulties proved too great, to contemplate the loss of our provision due to children not being able to come because of this crisis.

Thank you all for your continuing support and most especially for the good wishes and grateful thanks we have received for maintaining this facility for workers critical to the Covid-19 response. All of our staff are committed to doing what they can at this time to help our national response.