

Non Traditional Out of Hours Clubs: Evenings and Weekends

Introduction

Not all parents work or train 9:00am to 5:00pm, Monday to Friday, so their childcare needs often fall outside those of traditional **out of school clubs**. In the past, weekend and evening childcare was often met by the extended family or childminders. These days, as more grandparents work, families are geographically spread and the need for care for older children increases, several clubs have opened to fill the gap.

Key points to consider

- **Marketing** - Research carefully to ensure there is a need. Check what other services are available in the area and whether it is possible to link with them? How will you promote the service?
- **Funding** - What are parents/carers willing to pay for the service? Can you access other sources of funding?
- **Staff** - Can you find staff available to work evenings and weekends? You may have to pay above the going rate.
- **Premises** - Are your premises available evenings and weekends?



Requests from parents for weekend childcare prompted this club to undertake market research locally.

Two day nurseries in the area offered Saturday provision, but only for under five olds and not on a regular basis. So a Saturday club for 3 to 11 year olds was set up. It opens 9:00am to 12.30pm but hopes to extend to 5:00pm as demand increases. The aim is to accommodate the needs of parents who work on a Saturday and to provide a work/life balance for parents who work during the week and need time for other chores.

The club, situated in a leisure centre, is managed by the same **voluntary management committee** (also a registered charity) as the playgroup, **wrap around**, after school and **holiday club**. However, it is looking at becoming incorporated as a company limited by guarantee.

Eight staff work on a rota basis, with three on duty every session. These are drawn from the existing pool of staff, all of whom work a full week in other childcare provision. The rota system ensures every member of staff has some weekends off, and that there is adequate cover for sickness and holidays.

The leisure centre has an enormous volume of people passing through on a

daily basis, which is helpful in advertising. Leaflets and posters are on display around the building and all the cars in the car park are 'leafleted' regularly. Flyers and posters have also been distributed to libraries, council offices, surrounding schools and after school and **holiday clubs** as well as via their own network of **playgroups**, after school clubs and **holiday clubs**. The manager feels that the high profile, centrally-located venue is a great advantage. Fees are in line with those charged by other childcare services, and the childcare element of The Working Tax Credit is widely promoted to encourage take up by all who are entitled to claim.

The club, which is fully accessible, has dedicated rooms within the building including two large activity rooms, toilets and kitchen facilities. It can use the soft play area and sports hall within the leisure centre as well as extensive outdoor space including football, rugby and sports areas, play area and green space for walks and picnics in fine weather.

The breakfast and mid morning snack complies with their healthy eating policy, with fresh fruit available each day.

Case study 8



The lack of childcare on Saturdays prior to Christmas was a problem for some

parents whose children attended a very successful after school club in a rural part of West Wales. Parents requested a Saturday club in the run-up to Christmas as many of them were running small businesses and this was one of their busiest times of year.

A pilot was trialled and the club opened from 8:30am until 5:30pm for the first three Saturdays in December. It began with eight children attending - rising to 16 by the last session. Specialist workshops were held, including Christmas crafts and cooking.

The location is quite rural, although it is on a main route to town.

Recruiting staff was a challenge as none of the after school club staff wished to work Saturdays. Other staff had to be found and, in some instances, the project manager worked within the club. Also, due to the winter weather, the club ran indoors for much of the time, so a wide variety of activities had to be provided at all times to keep children occupied.

The club was promoted via local radio, the radio website, newspaper and newsletter. Funding to allow the club to run again is uncertain, but it is hoped that in future there will be more demand from other parents who want to do their Christmas shopping, as well as those parents who have to work.

A Saturday and evening club for children with autism

has been set up by this charitable organisation in response to requests from parents. The Saturday club runs from 10:00am to 2:00pm providing play and leisure for children and respite for some parents. The club is open to all children, but as yet the take up has been by parents of children with specific needs. The one to one staff are provided by the club but fees are met by social services.

This club also provides two evening sessions a week for older children and young people with specific needs to enable them to socialise with people their own age. It is open from 5:00pm to 8:00pm.

An evening club was set up by a college of further education.

It was open for primary school age children from 5:30pm to 9:00pm to coincide with the times of night classes that run from 6:00pm to 9:00pm, five evenings a week.

Childcare is often cited as a barrier to take-up of training and education in the evenings. It is also a barrier to the recruitment of lecturers, so the evening club met the needs of both students and lecturers.

There was no difficulty recruiting staff as many of them worked as class room assistants during the day. The college provided excellent facilities including a grassed outside area and a suite of computers, so there was a good range of activities on offer each evening.

It was decided that, as children would have eaten at home before coming to the club, it was only necessary to provide drinks during the session.

Fees were reasonable and in line with other after school clubs in the area. Also, as the club is registered with **CSSIW**, the child care tax credit can be accessed by those entitled to claim.

The college said 'Marketing for this type of facility is crucial. It is vital the club is advertised with the evening class prospectus so people know childcare facilities are available and can plan accordingly'.

