

# YBont

Issue 75  
ISSN 1464-4282

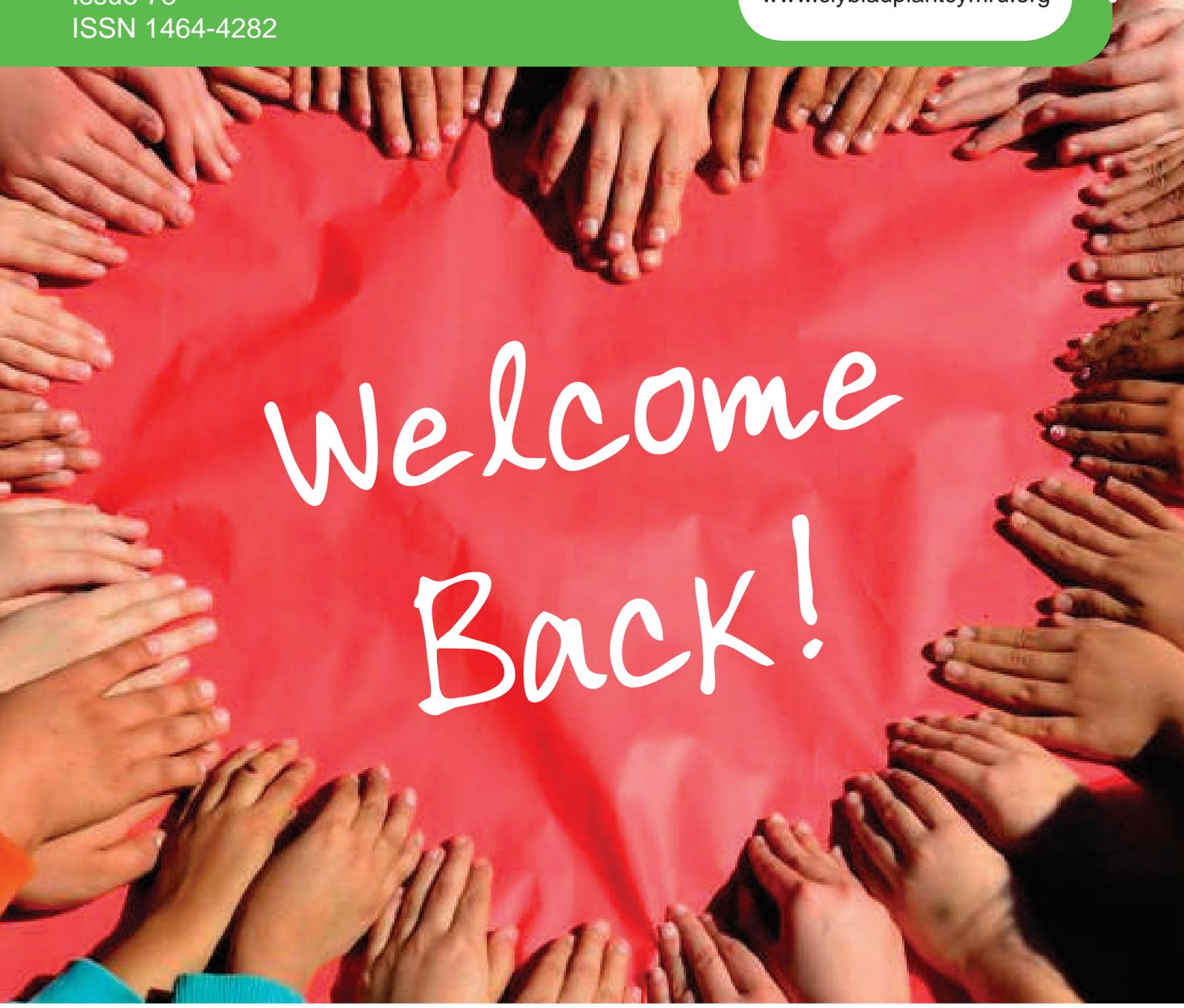
Clybiau  
Plant  
Cymru



KIDS' CLUBS

[www.clybiauplantcymru.org](http://www.clybiauplantcymru.org)

Autumn 2020



Welcome  
Back!

## In this issue...

- \* A New, But Very Different Term
  - \* Regional News
  - \* Wellbeing
  - \* Employer Updates
- ...and more

A company limited by  
guarantee 4296436  
Registered Charity 1093260  
Working in partnership with:



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

## In this issue...

A letter from the Chief Executive Officer.....2

New Term.....3

Focus on West Wales.....4 & 5

Focus on North Wales.....6 & 7

Focus on South East Wales.....8 & 9

Training.....10&11

Cymraeg.....12

Fundraising Ideas.....13

Projects.....14 & 15

Supporting Staff.....16

Supporting Children.....17

Meet the Tem - Lockdown Special.....18 & 19

Team Building.....20

Recognising Good Practice.....21

Employer Update.....22 & 23

Activities.....24

**Disclaimer:**  
Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs makes every effort to ensure that the content of our newsletter is correct. Please note that Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs does not endorse any of the services, clubs, activities or articles, and will not accept responsibility for the actions of any person or group of people who read this newsletter. The newsletter is provided purely for information only, without legal responsibility or liability.

A company limited by guarantee 4296436  
Registered Charity 1093260

Registered Office:  
Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs,  
Bridge House, Station Road, Llanishen,  
Cardiff, CF14 5UW  
Tel: 029 2074 1000  
Email: [info@clybiauplantcymru.org](mailto:info@clybiauplantcymru.org)  
Website: [www.clybiauplantcymru.org](http://www.clybiauplantcymru.org)



# Dear Out of School Childcare Club Member



Here I sit towards the end of lockdown writing my update, wondering where we will be when this newsletter is published. This is difficult for me as at this moment in time, I am cautiously optimistic that we will be ok; that the Clubs that we support will survive and I can assure you that if my fantastic team of staff have anything to do with it you will revive and this time next year will be thriving.

In this edition of Y Bont, we have focussed on wellbeing. We hope to support our Clubs, their Playworkers and Management. We hope that the support that we have given you over this seemingly unending time has given you ideas and activities to support your own personal wellbeing, which in turn will go on to support the children that you care for upon their return.

Throughout the lockdown, whilst my main concern has been getting the support for our Clubs, through meeting with Welsh Government, Care Inspectorate Wales, Social Care Wales and others, trying to ensure that we have input into guidance, ensuring the voice of the Out of School Sector is heard, I have also been concerned for my staff. I mentioned in the last edition what a wonderful team that there is here within the organisation: the work they have done, the tenacity that they have had, I know has not gone unnoticed. I can quite honestly say that the team here have demonstrated their intrinsic love for what they do. The work that has gone into the resources, the templates and the support that has been developed for the Out of School Childcare sector has quite clearly been from the heart. It has been a pleasure to see the drafts "roll off the press" ready for the administration and translation to take over and get them to you. A shout must also go to the Finance department who have in very testing circumstances managed to continue to make the organisation continue to function. All of this work has been driven by each individual member of staff, they have each brought their own ideas and solutions to the "table". Their individual expertise has seen what has been required and each has sought to meet that.

I would also like to give an extra special thanks to our Designer Amy Sefton who makes all the great work of the team look fantastic by producing, I know you will agree, eye catching publications. (Ah, thanks Jane! x - Amy)

We have had other support during lockdown from our database consultant Stuart Coe, Circle IT who kept us up and running, along with our

communications by General Communications. Our annual audit by Baldwins was undertaken remotely and effortlessly within the normal timeframes and our website supported by Creative Media.

This made me think about just what great teamwork we have across the organisation. There is not just one team working in a silo, we have seen cross department, cross region collaboration and the whole organisation coming together to make things work. All this to keep Clubs staff, Committees and Management supported, listening to them and hearing their concerns, keeping our Learners learning and all the while each member of the team here having to learn themselves. The new systems, the innovation, the complexities of how can we do this, how can we get to the end goal, what is the impact we want to make: these demonstrate to me the importance of an intrinsically motivated team. The importance of working together with a team who are passionate about what they do, that care that they are there to support your teams.

All of this has been done with cats walking into Zoom meetings, kids wanting to dress up (or down!), worries about other family members, the wrench of not being able to cwtch (or relief of not having to!), those who were still out there on the frontline. I am happy to say my team have been a rock, they have demonstrated that me being concerned for their wellbeing is important to them and they have shown their appreciation. Having said that, I don't think there is anyone across the organisation that has not had a wobble, certainly my team have seen my lip quiver on Zoom! I used to worry that I had to be strong for everyone else, my team have taught me that this is not the case, we are in this together and together we are stronger. Showing our vulnerable side is only human and demonstrates empathy.

My worries for my team are still there, they seem a resilient bunch, but it is important to keep talking, keep meeting, keep discussing feelings. If you take one thing from this edition, allow staff the time to understand that it is ok not to be ok!

We have all got a long way to go until this horrible virus has gone, will we ever be back to normal? Please remember we all need to look after each other. Take note of the ideas and suggestions that my team have come up with in this edition, let us help you to help your teams. We can come out of this stronger and kinder to ourselves, we just need to allow ourselves to try.

Jane O'Toole,  
Chief Executive Officer

This time last year we shared an article in the Autumn edition of Y Bont 'The New Term', giving ideas about how to welcome and settle children into their Childcare Setting after a long 6-week Summer break. This term, a year on, that article will be even more pertinent after a very long break from Childcare for many children and things, undoubtedly, feeling like a new start for everyone.

Childcare and Play Settings will look very different this term, from the number of children attending, toys and equipment that can be used and the interactions you have with parents. This may be disconcerting for some children, parents and staff so here are some ideas your Setting might want to consider for a smooth welcome back:

### Children

- To meet new protective measures and guidelines you may find you need to rearrange your Setting – new seating arrangements, removal of certain toys and equipment and markers on the floor, making the room look very different when children enter on their first day. Ask parents beforehand to explain to their children that things will look differently to ease them into the changes.
- Hold a 'virtual tour' of your Setting and send to the families that use your Setting so that they can see what your Setting looks like and its new layout before they arrive.
- Consider how changes you make to the room layout will impact a child on arrival. It would be beneficial to give the children a physical tour of the room and explain where toys and equipment will now be kept. Taking into account the different ages and needs of children attending your Setting, label any storage boxes, or cupboards where toys are kept so that they can find them easily.
- With social distancing likely to be in place for the foreseeable, supporting children to adhere to this will be difficult but think of ways you can make children feel important and valued whilst contact is limited – a simple smile (4th October is World Smile Day 2020), a thumbs up or send a high five through the air to a child. These are

# A New, But Very Different Term

things both children and staff can do.

- Ask each child to tell you their favourite song and then surprise them by playing it – great to get children moving and make a child feel special!
- Where signage and 'rules' are necessary, make these colourful! If you need floor markings, consider making these bright and using rainbow colours to make the environment more welcoming and less intimidating.

### Parents

- Keep parents and carers up to date with a regular newsletter. Communication with parents is always important, but with the recent uncertainty, keeping parents up to date with how your Childcare Setting is operating is key and you will no doubt receive many questions from parents. As guidance around protective measures change, you will need a place to update all parents and creating a newsletter not only saves time sharing information with individual parents but also ensures consistency with information.
- Social media is also a great way to communicate with parents and carers and can be a great tool to update parents quickly and informally. If you would like support to utilise social media for your Setting, contact your Childcare Business Development Officer.

### Staff

- 1-1 supervisions are a useful way for employers to speak to their staff individually and ensure they are happy and healthy at

work. Staff will naturally have concerns about the recent pandemic and the changes it has now had on their workplace. Taking the time to conduct supervisions early on will allow employers an insight into what concerns their staff may have and support them.

- Hold regular team meetings to give staff the chance to communicate with each other and ensure consistency in information shared. It's also a great time to problem solve and discuss new ideas. Team meetings, especially after time away from the workplace will support employees to bond, building on relationships and celebrate each other's hard work and achievements.
- It is important to support staff wellbeing at all times but can often be a difficult topic to broach so consider putting up a display of useful resources in the staff room or even use National Awareness Days such as National Work Life Week 2020 on 7th October or National Stress Awareness Day 2020 on November 6th to open up conversations.

Over the next term Settings will no doubt find themselves creating new and innovative ways to meet current guidance and keep children safe and happy. Please let us know if your Setting has developed an idea that worked well.

Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs has developed many useful resources to support your Setting with re-opening; they can be found on our website [www.clybiauplantcymru.org](http://www.clybiauplantcymru.org).

## Meet the Club!

**Club Name:** SMASH Care Ltd

**County:** Monmouthshire

**Legal structure:** Company limited by guarantee

**Childcare services offered:** After School Club

**Open since:** 2006

**What is has been your biggest challenge to date? How did you overcome this challenge?**  
The biggest challenge we have faced is trying to get people to understand what Playwork is about, it's not lessons, it is free choice, it's the children's club, it's about what they want it to be. Parents have said they want children to have set times to complete homework and if the children want to do their homework we support that but club is about them having their time to play with their friends and choose how they want to do that. The school felt it should be an extension of school and having to explain to the Governors that that isn't what After School Club was about, I found challenging. I consistently explain that children are still learning while they

are playing, they are getting so much from club by being given the freedom of choice, they lead their own play and we facilitate that for them.

**What is the best thing about working within an Out of School Childcare Club?** Seeing children blossom, when they first start they can be shy but you get to know them and find out what they like. And being there for them. I like Club to be a family for them.

**What is your favourite memory of club?** We were able to have a dance teacher come in and teach street dancing. We didn't charge any more to the parents for it; then the children were able to put a show on for the parents and it was just brilliant. It really promoted health and fitness while the children were playing. The children loved the dressing up and being a part of it, they were so excited. Seeing the response from the parents when the children put on the

show was priceless.

**What do children most like to do when they attend your club?** They like to eat! We talk to the children about what they like to eat and what they want for snack time and as soon as they come in the first thing they ask is, "what's to eat!"





# West Wales

## Keeping in Touch with Parents

Over the last few months, some Out of School Clubs in Swansea that had been unable to remain open were concerned about the impact of Covid-19 on their business when it did eventually come to re-open. Amongst their concerns was how to keep in touch with parents and carers who had been using their service and would hopefully return to use it when they reopened. Settings received several queries from concerned parents about when their childcare setting would reopen and what it would look like for their child and recognised that they needed to keep in touch with parents wherever possible. By keeping in touch with parents during the lockdown period, Settings were able to keep parents up to date on their plans to re-open, what it may look like when they did re-open and how they were going to follow the new guidelines. Owner of Hendrefoilan Wraparound and Penclawdd Wraparound, Bev, had used a variety of means to keep in touch with parents but was looking at ways to update them prior to re-opening. With the Childcare Business Development Officer, they looked at the importance of effective communication during this time and what would work best for varying bits of information.

**Telephone calls** – Great for personal 1-1 conversations tailored to the parent or carer but can be time consuming.

**Text messages/WhatsApp** - Useful when you want to send a generic message to several parents quickly but ideally needs to be kept short and can be interpreted incorrectly at times so needs to be very clear and concise.

**Newsletters** – Lots of Settings hadn't considered a newsletter before as an effective way to communicate with

parents and although it may not be somethings Settings would do too frequently, sending an update out to parents monthly or termly is useful to let parents know what's coming up with plenty of advance notice. It also means all parents receive the same information at the same time so avoids any confusion or delays. You can include updates on activity themes planned, seasonal updates such as to bring wellies or apply sunscreen, useful dates such as inset days and even inform parents of how they can access benefits such as The Childcare Offer and Tax-Free Childcare. Once you have developed a template it's easy to update with current information as and when you have more information to share. Newsletters can be printed and sent home with the children or more cost effectively, emailed or posted on your social media page.

**Social Media** - Social media can be used in a variety of ways - as a marketing tool for new prospective families or as a closed page/group to share information with existing families only. Having a social media

account though Facebook or Twitter that is set up as private for existing families you can post current updates as and when you need to, your newsletter, share any relevant documents you need parents to be aware of and even pictures (with parental permission) of children to demonstrate what they have been up to in your care. There are always lots of things to consider when using social media such as security, child safety and confidentiality and its always useful to have a social media policy that sets out how it will be run by staff within your setting (there is a 'Media Policy' available for Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs' members through the Stepping Out publication on the website).

Whether your setting re-opened during the Summer or is still yet to re-open, communication with parents should always be an important part of your delivery of care. Parental concerns around Covid-19 are likely to be around for some time and this Autumn term may be a good time to review how your setting currently communicates with parents.



### Challenges for the Sector

There's no denying it has been a fraught few months for a significant number of clubs across Wales. Understandably, statutory agencies have been incredibly busy with the crisis, but that has meant that many voices have yet to be heard, and many frustrations continue unanswered.

We have worked tirelessly to get our sector's voices heard with blogs and with letters to the First Minister, Minister for Education, Minister for Transport and meetings held with the Deputy Minister for Health and Social Services, outlining the challenges and needs of the sector. Thank you to all of you who have responded to our telephone calls, emails, and surveys. Your ongoing communication has provided essential evidence, allowing us as the voice of Out of School Childcare in Wales to lobby passionately and persistently on your behalf. It has also allowed us to develop the resources you have told us you need to help you prepare to re-open from the end of June.

We continue to lobby for suitable support for the sector and hope that by the time of this publication settings are in a stronger position for children to continue to benefit from local childcare businesses and parents can access quality, accessible childcare after this pandemic.

### Business Planning

The Covid-19 crisis has led to many of our Clubs feeling the need to look closer at their governance and business operation. We have continued to remotely deliver over 35 business skills support sessions/month with Clubs across West Wales during lockdown via telephone, email and video conferencing. It pays to be prepared!

We have been supporting our Clubs with business planning, and with moves towards a more robust legal structure. It is our aim to support as many of our clubs towards a stable and prosperous future as we are able.

Please contact us now if you feel you need assistance; with preparing to re-open, sustainability/financial planning, registering with Care Inspectorate Wales to ensure families benefit from reduced fees (Tax Free Childcare) and funded places (The Childcare Offer), registering as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, which offers more protection to your voluntary management committee, updating your policies and procedures, or any other aspect of your business planning.



## Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs Needs You!

We are at that time of year again when we are looking for enthusiastic and willing volunteers to join our Board of Trustees.

We currently have spaces to fill in North and West Wales, but also welcome applications from anyone in the South East Wales Region. We also have the ability to Co-opt 3 individuals from other Sectors who may have an interest or wish to support the organisation.

You will need to be able to commit to a minimum of 4 meetings a year; these may be by electronic means or in person. Any out of pocket expenses will be reimbursed.

Positions are only available to Members, and so if you would like to represent your Setting and be the voice of Out of School Childcare in Wales, please keep an eye on your email and the website and social channels to receive information on how you can join our Board. This is an excellent development opportunity that will give you an insight into how our organisation works behind the scenes to support Settings just like yours. For more details, contact [membership@clybiauplantcymru.org](mailto:membership@clybiauplantcymru.org)



KIDS' CLUBS



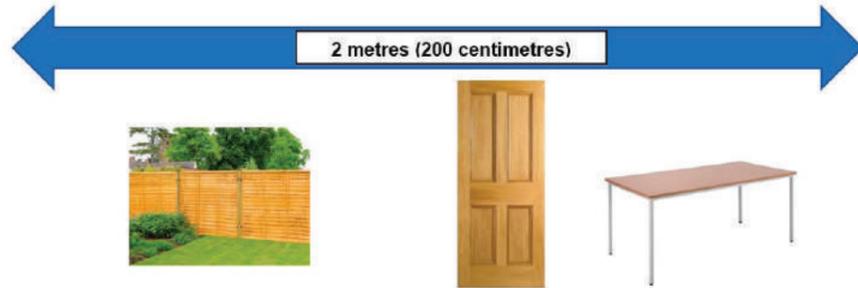
# North Wales

## Well Being and Social Distancing

Thinking about supporting children's well-being includes developing their confidence and self-esteem, ensuring their surroundings are safe and secure and they can still play with other children whilst social distancing.

An activity you could do with the children is measuring how far is 2 metres. This supports their maths as well as their understanding of social distancing.

Let them think about items in the setting which are approximately 2 metres long/high.



This could be:

- A table.
- A door.
- A playmat.
- An adult working in the setting.
- A fence panel outside.

You could:

- Put mats on the floor, asking them if they think they are 2 metres apart.
- Measure a piece of wallpaper 2 metres long.
- Paint a tree 2 metres tall.
- Plant sunflowers and put marks on the wall what is 1 metre and what is 2 metres.

It is important to get the children involved about the new way the setting has to work. Social distancing, washing hands, not sitting together, waiting in a queue. The more practical activities you can do with the children, the more likely they are to remember what they should do whilst at the setting.

### Clwb Y Morfa coming together for the children

Clwb Y Morfa, Abergele, a Community Interest Company (CIC) providing Breakfast, Afterschool and Holiday clubs, have come together to ensure the children of key worker parents receive the best care during this uncertain time. Based on site of Ysgol Glan Morfa, the club have moved from their usual building to join the school hall to avoid moving the children between places. The staff have been working around the clock to ensure the children have a sense of 'normality' each day.

The children have been participating in lots of health and well-being activities

such as gardening, colouring rainbows and baking. The staff have worked really hard come together to support key worker parents throughout this pandemic.

Well done Clwb Y Morfa!



## Supporting the Out of School Childcare sector during lockdown

Our Childcare Business Development Officer, North Wales, Sandra Welsby, met with an Out of School Childcare Club in Flintshire during February 2020 regarding the club becoming a Charitable Incorporated Organisation and explained the process.

After the initial meeting the next step was for the member of staff to discuss the benefits of becoming a Charitable Incorporated Organisation with their Voluntary Management Committee. Then during March 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic hit us and suddenly we were all in lockdown. Lots of questions crossed our minds. How were we going to work? How were the Afterschool Clubs going to manage?

The Government made many decisions including furlough to support the economy. Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs decided to close their offices and discussed with all staff the procedures and the plans to work from home. Suddenly packed up with files, laptops and mobile phones, as an organisation we were all set up and ready to work supporting the sector from home.

We all worked together and very quickly got used to meetings over Teams or Zoom and emails and phone calls being our main source of communication. Trying to contact people Sandra had met prior to lockdown became quite difficult, not knowing whether clubs were open or whether staff had been furloughed etc. Then one day 'out of the blue' Sandra received an email from the leader of the club Sandra had met in February requesting support with the process to become a Charitable Incorporated Organisation.

Sandra arranged a telephone meeting and decided on a step by step method to take her through the process, which included decisions that the Committee needed to make. Which constitution did they want to proceed with? What was the new club to be called? Did they have accounts to submit to the Charity Commission?

Due to the lockdown Sandra suggested the leader met with the Management Committee over the computers and any decisions made were minuted, as well as confirming decisions via email. This worked well and the Committee agreed the Constitution.

Sandra and the leader 'met' again, and the next step was to confirm with the bank that their bank account was suitable for a Charitable Incorporated Organisation and to confirm the Charity Commission's safeguarding guidelines. These were completed and the Committee were ready to submit their application to the Charity Commission, they did this online and received their application number. A few weeks then passed by.

Sandra supported the setting again as they had received questions from the Charity Commission regarding the recruitment of staff and whether the staff were paid. These are currently being completed in order to respond. Once the club receives their charitable status number, they will begin work to submit their application to become Care Inspectorate Wales registered, Sandra will be supporting them through the process. We hope their applications are approved to enable the club and playgroup to open in September 2020. This will ensure the club has a much stronger management structure and will be able to access grants in the future as they'll be a registered charity.

We may still be in lockdown; however, we know that we have all embraced a new way of working and support continues to be provided to a very valuable Out of School Childcare sector throughout Wales.

If you think your club will benefit from becoming a Charitable Incorporated Organisation then please contact us, we can deliver a webinar, support via telephone and deliver meetings on the computer. Please telephone your local Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids Clubs office. We look forward to hearing from you.

## Changing times

As always, but especially during these difficult times our Learners have been at the forefront of our mind and as an organisation we have had to adapt the ways in which we engage with them.

Our North Wales Training Officers, Tracey Bargh and Cath Smith, have embraced the various teaching platforms that as an organisational Training Team have been developed. These have included Microsoft Teams, Zoom and even WhatsApp video chat. They have been able to set up one-to-one training sessions with some of their Learners especially those that may be struggling with remote learning. Being able to engage with the Learners "face to face" ensuring that they are not put at a disadvantage during these difficult times.

As an organisation we have a new online learning resource 'Edmodo'. Tracey and Cath have both been busy (along with the rest of the training team) uploading resources every week to support the Learners with their work. Learners can comment on any post uploaded and a member of our training team is always on hand to answer any questions they may have.

Tracey and Cath are both very dedicated to their Learners here in the North and would like to take this opportunity to say 'well done' and 'thank you' to them all for all their hard work and commitment they have shown to their qualification. Keep up the good work!



### Need to contact us?

You can contact the North Wales team by phone on 01492 536318, by email: [info-nw@clybiauplantcymru.org](mailto:info-nw@clybiauplantcymru.org) by post: 19, Princes Drive, Colwyn Bay LL29 8HT



# South East Wales

## A Reflection of Sunnybank Day Nursery

Jane Bateman, Owner of Sunnybank Nursery

"There are always setbacks in any business, but the decision to close Sunnybank Day Nursery on 26th March, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, was done with a very heavy heart. The nursery was in such a positive, progressive phase and the closure could not have come at a worse time. On the positive side, the lockdown provided time to reflect on the many challenges the nursery has faced over the past year and the realisation that we have succeeded in overcoming every adversity, was truly heartening.

Prior to closing, we sensed a new enthusiasm spreading through the nursery. The rooms that had already been decorated were having an uplifting effect on all the staff and moral was really high. Most noticeable, was how the entire team became even more energised when we discussed the idea of adopting the Curiosity Approach to Learning into each room. To our surprise, no one objected to the idea of change and everyone was keen and eager to learn more about the new approach to enhance children's learning.

Following our joint Inspection from Estyn Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales and Care Inspectorate Wales back in 2018, one of the recommendations was to improve our After School/Holiday Club setup. Therefore, within the later part of 2019 excited by the prospect of creating a designated Out of School Club, we set about dismantling the soft-play room on the ground floor to create a tailor-made space for our Out of School Childcare provision. A builder came in over the Christmas period and knocked an opening through into the adjacent dining room. Next came the plasterer, electrician and decorator to do their bit and within two weeks the work was completed and 'Sunny Kids Club' was born. At last the children had a special place they could call their own, and from their smiles and squeals of delight, when they entered their new Club Room for the first time, we knew we had done the right thing. All the hard work had been worth it. Of course, none of this would have been possible without a generous grant from Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs and the helpful advice and support from Clare Dare, Childcare Business Development Officer for Newport.

Spurred on by the look of our bright, newly decorated Out of School Club, we decided to decorate all the playrooms in the nursery. The staff were really excited at the prospect and patiently put up with dust and inconvenience, as the decorators worked their way from room to room. The decorating was finally completed after the nursery was closed and the revamped and freshly painted rooms will soon come to life with the chatter and giggles of the staff and children when the nursery is open.

This is the moment when I would like to acknowledge the incredible work of our Nursery Manager Natalie Bourne, which has been so integral to the success of Sunnybank. When we were looking for a new Manager back in early 2018, I recognised the potential of a nursery nurse working in the Toddler group and Natalie became our new Nursery Manager. Within two challenging years with the benefit of training and support from a brilliant support teacher and staff from Family Information Service and The Early Years department in Newport, we are so fortunate to have the most amazing, confident and competent Manager in charge of Sunnybank. Natalie has achieved so much in such a short time. She has brought together a wonderful team who share her values and high standards of care and education of the children. We learned during lockdown that the tender application she had put together for Sunnybank to provide Early Education to our plus three-year olds for the next three years has been accepted. We had more good news during lockdown, also attributed to Natalie's hard work, when we heard that every criterion in the Service Level Agreement had achieved all 'Greens'. A great improvement from last year and previous years. The final feather in our cap for 2020 is the score of '5' by the Food Standards Agency for cleanliness and record keeping in the nursery kitchen.

Through tenacity and determination resilience, we have overcome many obstacles and we all look forward to the future with eagerness and positivity as soon as the Covid-19 lockdown comes to an end on the 29th June and relaunching our Sunny Kids Club."

## Supporting Settings in South East Wales Remotely During Lockdown

As Childcare Business Development Officers, our best tool to support Out of School Childcare Clubs is coming out to meet with you and sitting down and working with you on business skills and targets you have to grow, develop and refine your business. As a result of the lockdown during Covid-19 this was not possible, and we had to ask ourselves how we could continue to support you all with these restrictions.

Through remote working whilst the school was in lockdown, there was an opportunity to develop this venture and use the time to support setting up a Club. Gwen Vaughan, a representative of the school governors and Clare set up a working group of volunteers to plan the route ahead for this project, and this was said: "Clare from Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs has been amazingly supportive in helping us to keep the momentum going of setting up Oak Hill ASD Childcare provision. We are at the very start and Clare's support and knowledge has been incredibly useful and appreciated. The template policies and information from Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs have also been helpful as a starting point and guide".

As an organisation, we have Childcare Business Development Officers in South East Wales, West Wales and North Wales and who worked together remotely to create a plethora of resources, drawing on all of our knowledge and skills. We have worked to create documents to support you on funding, marketing, reopening post lockdown and how to continue offering enriching play opportunities while observing social distancing and infection control. These resources have been valuable and well received throughout the sector, but we still wanted to be able to support our individual Settings to continue the work being done before lockdown.

The working group has been meeting via Google Teams every Monday since the end of April with a view of establishing a committee and setting up a registered Childcare provision. Progress is being made to develop a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) which will allow the committee to apply for charity funding in the coming months. Policies have been developed and a vision for a Holiday Club has been created. The project has moved forward a very long way in a short time within challenging circumstances of the Covid-19 pandemic; with the teamwork and vision to achieve, the Club will enable many parents to have the support of much needed Childcare when the children and young people are back in to school.

Using the various tools available for meeting remotely we used programmes such as Microsoft Teams and Google Meets to continue to meet with our Settings and have made a tremendous amount of progress that would have seemed impossible without being able to meet together at Settings.

Another venture within South East Wales that has benefited from the remote working is Heya Bina Holiday Club in Cardiff. The Club is the Vision of Amy Clements who, as a parent living in the Cathays area of Cardiff, had found it difficult to find Childcare to support her in the school holidays. Speaking to local parents, there appeared to be a real need for Childcare particularly in the holidays. Amy decided she wanted to set up a Holiday Club to support this and reached out to Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs for support with the venture. Becky and Amy were in the process of finding a time to meet when lockdown happened.

SMASH Care Ltd are an Out of School Club operating from St Mary's Primary school in Chepstow, Monmouth. They have been running since 2006. In February this year, South East Wales Childcare Business Development Officer Becky Hall visited SMASH and met with the owner Kim. Kim had informed Becky that they wanted to become registered with Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW). Parents had approached them and the school and asked if this was possible so that they could access support from Tax Free Childcare.

Using Google Meets, Becky and Amy were able to have their first introduction meeting where they discussed Amy's vision and the progress she had made to date. An Action Plan was created. Currently, focus is on finding a suitable venue, not an easy feat during lockdown but together they have found a few viable options and plan to use photos and video calls with the venues to assess the suitability. Amy has already begun work on her Statement of Purpose and policies and once a venue has been secured, she is in a very good position to complete CIW registration. There is a real hope that by continuing to make progress the setting could be available for parents to use during October half term. Given that October half term may now be two weeks as opposed to one, this will really support the families within the area.

An action plan was developed and Kim was keen to re-do all policies, and staff files, to ensure they were all compliant with the regulations. Becky returned to the Setting and work began on the policies. A second meeting was arranged to continue working but then lockdown came. Becky and Kim continued to stay in touch via email. Kim wanted to take some time out with her family but re connected when she was ready to continue working on registration. A Microsoft Teams meeting was arranged and using this tool policies were completed. The Person in Charge is due to start her Transition to Playwork and there has been so much progress made during lockdown that we are confident SMASH will be registered by the time they are able to return in September. Kim has said of the process "the support and advice at this time has been so welcome"

Childcare Business Development Officer for Newport, Clare Dare had begun working on setting up a new Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Out of School Club within Ysgol Bryn Derw during the start of 2020. Feasibility research and consultation had highlighted that there was/is demand for a Holiday Club for the children attending Ysgol Bryn Derw. With the support of Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs and the governors, Head and other staff within the school, work commenced to set up a working group. To support the sustainability of the Club, which would incur high levels of expenditure due to the one to one support required for

the children who would be attending, it was identified that a Charitable Committee would need to be set up.

Whilst remote supporting has been a new way of working, it has not been too difficult to adjust into this new way of life. Many Clubs closed during the pandemic and when reopening started there were many areas that required support. The Childcare Business Development Officers role was paramount within this process. Health & Hygiene checklists and risk assessment templates were devised to support the Childcare Sector, with individual cases discussed with Childcare Business Development Officers. Reopening checklists enabled the Clubs to have the tools needed for a smooth transition that enabled them to safely re open. Many Clubs needed a new approach and this felt very overwhelming when faced with Government guidance. Social distancing had become a necessity, and processing this was difficult enough for adults, let alone children. Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs have striven to support the Childcare Sector and children throughout the pandemic.

Being able to continue working remotely and using the remote support tools available during lockdown has been invaluable both for supporting Settings during the pandemic and reopening process and for being able to continue to support Settings with their individual ventures. However, we very much look forward to returning to visiting Settings, whenever that might be, as there is real value to meeting face to face. It is good to know though that these tools work and that they are available to use so we can have every opportunity to support the sector in the quality care they provide for the children and families in their communities.

### Congratulations Clwb Y Ddraig

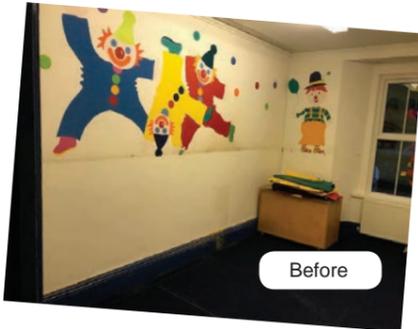
Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs would like to congratulate Clwb Y Ddraig, Caerphilly for securing funding through the Economic Resilience Fund Grant. As with most Out of School Childcare throughout Wales during Covid-19, owner Becci Bennett worried about how they were going to stay afloat financially. Her Settings were newly established and therefore they struggled to access any of the Government support including the furlough scheme for several newly recruited staff.

At first it didn't seem as if it were viable to apply for the Economic Resilience Fund Grant but Becci decided there was nothing to lose from trying. Becci really focused on getting across in the application narrative the ramification for her Settings if she could not receive support. 9 staff members would be out of work and when the country came out of lockdown and parents were able to return to work there would be no Childcare available. To her surprise she was successful!

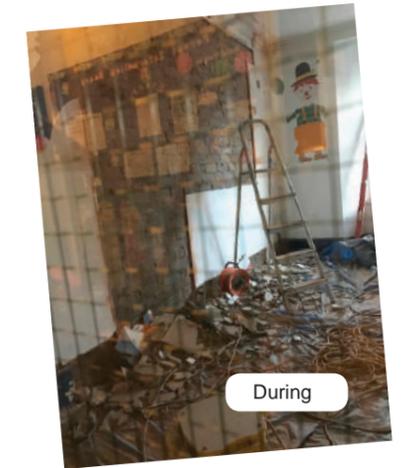
Becci says "I am just so happy that 9 jobs can be secured and 200 children's places are safeguarded, allowing parents to return to work once they are able to."

We can learn from Becci's experience with this grant the importance of just going for it! If you can make a strong enough argument for your case, you may just be successful.

If you would like any support with grant application and finding funding contact your Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs Childcare Business Development Officer.



Before



During



After



### Need to contact us?

You can contact the South East Wales team by phone on 029 2074 1000, by email: [info@clybiauplantcymru.org](mailto:info@clybiauplantcymru.org) by post: Bridge House, Station Road, Llanishen, Cardiff. CF14 5UW

## It's Elementary!

The Playwork Curriculum suggests that play environment should offer opportunity to enable the children and young people access to opportunities to gain essential experiences.

The Playwork Curriculum covers some of the following categories: The Elements (Fire, Water, Air, Earth), Identity, Concepts and The Senses. The environment should provide access to a varied landscape, materials, and opportunities for building and change, should provide focuses, choices, alternatives, access to tools, loose parts, challenge and risk.

*“Play is an essential part of children’s life and vital to their development. It is the way children explore the world around them and develop and practice skills. It is essential for physical, emotional and spiritual growth, for intellectual and educational development, and for acquiring social and behavioural skills. Play is a generic term applied to a wide range of activities and behaviours that are satisfying to the child, creative for the child and freely chosen by the child. Children’s play may or may not involve equipment or have an end product. Children play on their own and with others. Their play may be boisterous and energetic or quiet and*

*contemplative, light-hearted or very serious.”* The New Charter for Children’s Play 1998, Children’s Play Council

In this edition we will focus on **the Elements**. What are the Elements?

### The Elements

Alongside living elements, namely plants and animals, the Four Elements of **Earth, Air, Water and Fire** provide rich resources, context and themes for children’s play in outdoor environments, and can easily be provided in even limited outdoor spaces.

- The Four Elements are linked to the weather and the seasons, and as such different Elements will be experienced in different ways at different times of the day and year (providing children have regular access to the outdoors!).
- The Four Elements are often experienced by children through playful interaction with living things e.g. bugs in the soil, wind rustling in leaves, frogs splashing in water, fires burning wood.
- Wild spaces provide many and varied opportunities for children to experience the Four Elements, e.g. bare earth, the wind in open spaces, the flow of water in streams and rivers or campfires in the woods.

- Artificial outdoor play settings can also be designed or adapted to facilitate playing with the Four Elements, e.g. soil in containers, structures that resonate or respond to air movements, water features and container fires.
- Children’s basic interactions with the Four Elements are intuitive and playful, other activities may be more structured to allow children to connect with the Four Elements in different ways, e.g. floating boats, clay modelling, flying kites, cooking with fires.
- Symbolically, the Four Elements can also be used to characterise different styles of children’s play: Earth = primitive, sensory; Fire = active, passionate; Water = reflective, emotions; Air = thinking, creative. Facilitating a range of play opportunities outdoors allows each of these play styles to be expressed by different children at different times.

**What activities/ play spaces do you offer within your setting so children can have the opportunity to access the 4 Elements?**

**Why don’t you send/ share some pictures or your ideas on our Facebook or Instagram page?**

## Supporting Play and Well-being for Children, Young People and families during lockdown and transitioning back to school and Childcare Settings

It’s normal for all children and young people to feel worried or anxious at the moment. We’ve all experienced sudden changes in our lives and routines – and we’re living with lots of uncertainty about the coming weeks and months. For some children and young people, the coronavirus pandemic may also worsen or trigger anxieties they were already struggling with, in particular for children and young people with additional learning needs or learning disabilities.

**Here are five things you can do to support your child along with practical ideas and techniques you can implement at home.**

1. Talk to them about what’s going on. Find out how they’re feeling and what they’re thinking about, let them know it’s okay to feel scared or unsure, and try to answer their questions and reassure them in an age appropriate manner. Remember, you do not need to know all the answers, but talking things through can help them feel calmer.

Create a safe space at home, plenty of soothing light and soft furnishings. Encourage children to use the space when they need some time out or even when they want to talk.

2. Help them to reflect on how they’re feeling and encourage them to think about the things

they can do to make them feel safer and less worried.



Picture cards can help children and young people process emotions; often a visual stimulus can start a conversation or help children explain how they are feeling. Why

not use feeling cards to help you understand how children are feeling; this is particularly useful for children who experience communication difficulties. It may be useful to create a lanyard with the cards attached for quick reference.

3. Reassure them that this will pass, you’re there for them, and you will get through this together- Keep smiling and try to stay as positive as you can.

4. Spend time doing a positive activity with your child (such as reading, playing, painting or cooking) to help reassure them and reduce their anxiety. This is also a great way of providing a space for them to talk through their concerns, without having a ‘big chat’.

Creating a soothing sensory box is a great way to help children relax and process emotions and feelings of worry or anxiety. Why not fill the box with photographs, memories, sensory toys, music boxes, feely blankets? It provides a great opportunity to sit and relax whilst talking about happy things.



5. Keep as many regular routines as possible, so that your child feels safe and that things are stable.

Routines and structure are important for all children, but they can be especially beneficial for children with additional needs. Routines help ALN children to feel safe and secure. The routine gives them a sense of confidence in their ability to handle daily life and can be used to help the child meet developmental milestones. As we look to

# Playvolution

## – evolving our Playworker role after Covid-19

**Playwork Principles 4: For Playworkers, the play process takes precedence and Playworkers act as advocates for play when engaging with adult led agendas.**

For those Playworkers that have been working through these strange times as well as those that haven’t been able to work due to Settings being closed, it is now time to take a moment to reflect and consider the new expectations of our role as Playworkers and how best we can still support all children and young people to play. It does not mean that we must completely change our practice and in many ways it will stay the same, but in other ways we will have to be willing and able to adapt to the new guidelines and infection control that are in place.

**Playwork Principle 5: The role of the Playworker is to support all children and young people in the creation of a space in which they can play.**

There will be many Playworkers worrying about how they are going to be able to provide enriched and diverse play opportunities for the children and young people attending their setting. There will be those worrying that it is too soon to return as well as some worrying as to how it will all work. It’s ok to feel this way, it is scary, and it is different, so to worry is completely natural.

**Playwork Principle 6: The Playworker’s response to children and young people playing is based on a sound up to date knowledge of the play process, and reflective practice**

The first thing to remember is to talk about your

worries, to share them with your team, together you may be able to find suitable solutions to any concerns or issues that you may have.

Take time to plan and prepare, this will be key in order to ensure that everyone, staff, children and parents are happy to return and feel supported and listened to. Think about how it will work in your setting, think about how parents pick up and how children are collected, as a team run through a typical session and consider what might need altering or changing.

Prepare to have anxious children, parents and staff. Be prepared to talk, to listen and to reassure. Children may want to talk about their experiences of lockdown, their feelings or to play these out. Think about the children that attend your setting and consider what might be issues arising when they return. Talk to children, young people and parents before they return about any worries and how these worries can be alleviated.

Social distancing with children should be encouraged but this isn’t necessarily going to be practical. A Playworker in a hub told a story of a child who kept hugging her, and also hugged her to apologise for hugging her as she knew she shouldn’t. Think about how comfortable you are, and your team are as individuals dealing with situations that might arise, e.g who will deal with first aid and how? Will you need additional uniform or additional types of PPE available so that staff feel comfortable in these situations and protected?

Just because it isn’t easily cleaned, doesn’t mean it can’t be used. Rotating resources, materials and loose parts will be key. If things

can’t be easily cleaned, put them away for 72 hours to avoid any possible spread of infection.

Cleaning stations. Once a child has finished with equipment such as tennis rackets or paintbrushes, they are taken to a designated area in the setting that will be used as a cleaning station where a member of staff can clean them in a ready-made Milton solution or with appropriate cleaning sprays or wipes. Also include anti-bacterial gel the children can freely use.

Using the outdoor space is essential and highly advised as part of the recommended guidance to effectively support social distancing and to also minimise the risk of transmission and supporting health and well-being. Suitable clothing will be essential, as they say there is no such thing as bad weather just bad clothing.

You will need to have the children in “bubbles” which is a set number of children who will remain in the same group. Each bubble should have their own toys/materials/resources which can be shared between the children in the bubble. Ideally bubbles will need to reflect bubbles that are being kept at school where possible.

Whilst our role as Playworkers will still be the same and underpinned by the Playwork Principles, it will be important to take the time to talk, reflect and prepare with all those involved but especially your team and the children and young people. The more you can prepare and plan, the easier the transition back will be for all involved and the more you will feel confident providing an enriched and flexible play environment for the children and young people to access.

## The Changing role of the Training Team during the COVID-19 Pandemic

In the midst of an unprecedented crisis, the Training Team at Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids’ Clubs have swiftly adopted agile and flexible working practices by putting new technology and processes in place.

Since the beginning of March, the Training Team have worked tirelessly to operate a fully remote service. We have used various platforms such as Microsoft Teams and Zoom in order to meet as a team on a weekly basis. We have also used these platforms to engage with our learners to ensure they are not put at a disadvantage during these difficult times.

We have a new online learning resource in operation ‘Edmodo’ It allows our team of Training Officers to upload and share resources each week with our learners. In the absence of face to face training sessions, it has been a valuable tool to focus on individual topics such as equality and inclusion. It is also fully interactive which allows learners to participate by posting comments, asking questions or completing the online tasks set each day.

As we work through this crisis, things are changing daily, so too is our approach in order to meet the demands of the sector. We strive to keep going and acknowledge the commitment and dedication our learners have shown. Many have continued to work in schools and Childcare hubs putting themselves on the front line to care for the children of key workers- You are all heroes!

Remember....there is light at the end of the tunnel – we just don’t know how long the tunnel is.

make changes to our daily lives in the months ahead as we move out of lockdown, children and young people will be returning to school and Childcare Settings. You could create a visual timetable, which can be a valuable resource to help manage the transition in these difficult times.



If you would like more information, Cardiff and Vale University and Swansea Bay Health Boards have devised a full and comprehensive guide to supporting Children and Young People with Additional Needs and learning disabilities. To download the full guides along with free resources to support all Children and Young People over the next few months visit [www.childcomwales.org.uk/coronavirus/](http://www.childcomwales.org.uk/coronavirus/)

## Work Welsh

As so many of our Settings were forced to close during this crisis, the Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs' Work Welsh Team analysed information collected from Setting assessments to develop practical resources to support Settings in continuing to develop and strengthen their Welsh language skills and confidence during lockdown.

Many practitioners reported barriers with obtaining and utilising Welsh resources across several key areas: 'Making use of bilingual or Welsh media resources'; 'Including the Welsh language in outdoor provision' and; 'Communicating with children and families'.

To support Practitioners to access more Welsh resources for the sector, and alongside offering remote support with language and policy development, Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs has developed 'Work Welsh Wednesday'. Each Wednesday since the beginning of lockdown, the Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids'

Clubs' Team has been developing and releasing videos, worksheets, and word searches for social media and YouTube, ensuring that Welsh resources remain accessible for all.

As a direct result of your feedback, we have released videos supporting development and pronunciation of the Welsh language, word searches to aid vocabulary development and are currently developing poster resources for Settings to accompany this work. We expect to continue this resource development until the end of lockdown and intend to deliver these resources to all our Clubs who have expressed an interest in developing the Welsh language in their Setting.

If you would like to see us in action, or have any ideas for further resources your Club would like to see, please visit on Facebook [www.facebook.com/clybiau](http://www.facebook.com/clybiau), our website [www.clybiauplantcymru.org](http://www.clybiauplantcymru.org), or YouTube @ [Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCybiauPlantCymruKidsClubs).

## Signposting to Welsh Resources to use during lockdown

During these unprecedented times you have possibly found yourself with some spare time. Why not take up a new skill to fill this time? Learning a new language will be a great place to start. Not only will this keep you busy, but it will keep your mind busy as well. There are many benefits to learning a second language including, boosts brain power, improves memory, enhances the ability to multi-task, sharpens the mind, keeps the mind sharper for longer, enhances decision-making.

Below are some links you could try to assist with your learning Welsh:

- <https://www.duolingo.com/>
- <https://learnwelsh.cymru/>
- <https://www.facebook.com/watch/clybiau/2016580415153709/>

Give it a try!

## Out of School

Insurance for out of school clubs



Approximately 15% discount to members of Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs

Out of School insurance has been designed for out of school clubs providing activities both before and after school.

For more information visit [www.mortonmichel.com/outofschool](http://www.mortonmichel.com/outofschool)  
Alternatively email [outofschool@mortonmichel.com](mailto:outofschool@mortonmichel.com)  
or call 020 8603 0943



**Morton Michel**  
The Childcare Insurance Specialist

Morton Michel Ltd (Morton Michel) is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority

With many businesses feeling the financial strain following the outbreak of COVID-19 and temporary closure (or limited service provision), you may be considering ways to save money or raise additional funds. Whilst it may feel 'cheeky' to ask for donations or to hold fundraising activities at a time where some households may be facing reduced income or financial strain themselves, it is important to remember that at times of crisis, charities still need to raise money. As an Out of School Childcare Club, you are community focused and there to support local families and to help the local economy, but to do this, you have to continue to be there! You may be surprised at just how much your local community values you, and how many people will rally round to support in any way they can.

So, review what you need (e.g. complete a cashflow forecast and business plan – support and resources are available via our website) and let people know how they can help!

The Institute of Fundraising has a number of resources, including some articles specific to COVID-19 fundraisers.

### A few things to consider:

- As pressing as the financial situation may be, it is important not to rush into fundraising decisions/activities without first discussing these with your Trustees/Committee members and staff, so that a whole-team approach can be adopted
- Consider what is possible in terms of current social distancing and infection control guidelines – whilst summer fetes and discos may have been good fundraising activities prior to the outbreak of COVID-19, it might be that you have to temporarily opt for more remote activities
- The Code of Fundraising Practice (Fundraising Regulator, October 2019) for fundraising that takes place in the UK which aims to promote consistent, high standards for fundraising, with all fundraising needing to meet legal requirements and be carried out with integrity.

### Remote Fundraisers

- Delivery of Afternoon Tea boxes
- Online Quiz Nights – with paid entry and a gift (or small pot of money) for the winner
- Virtual walk/run – with a combined team 'target' in terms of distance
- Virtual talent show – remember if children

are included in this, you will need to gain appropriate consent from parents/carers

- Virtual lesson – do you have a member of staff who could host a craft night or cookery night, with payment to take part?
- Crowdfunding campaign – small donations from a large pool of people ('crowd') can result in significant funds raised

### Funding from Charities/Trusts

#### Moondance Covid-19 Relief Fund

Grants available to:

- Registered charities based and working in Wales
- Charities based outside Wales, for their work in Wales only.

Will consider applications for:

- Staff retention
- Current activities and services in jeopardy
- Evolution of services to adapt to the current crisis

### Good news for Charities

Earn a little bit extra for your Charity while you shop (and ask friends/families/clients to do the same)

### Have you heard about Easyfundraising?

Raising free donations when you shop online couldn't be easier! You'll find big name retailers here like John Lewis, Amazon, eBay and Apple, all ready to help you raise more for your cause when you shop with them.



Visit [www.easyfundraising.org.uk](http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk) for details on how to register your cause. Use their online platform for free and easy ways to promote your cause on your website, communications and social media accounts, and to remind your customers / suppliers at every opportunity to support you.

If you are unable to register your Setting as a cause, and would like to support Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs, please visit

<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/clybiauplantcymrukidsclubs/> to support us

### Support us while we support you!

Online shopping through [www.easyfundraising.org.uk/clybiauplantcymrukidsclubs](http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/clybiauplantcymrukidsclubs) doesn't cost you any extra, but allows us to receive up to 15% of all purchases made from the 400+ stores listed, meaning we have more funds available to continue supporting clubs like yours.

### e-news

As a member club you can access past editions of our e-news funding bulletins in the members' area of our website at [www.clybiauplantcymru.org](http://www.clybiauplantcymru.org) and, if we have an email address for you, future editions will be sent to you directly. Send your email details to [membership@clybiauplantcymru.org](mailto:membership@clybiauplantcymru.org) to ensure you receive your electronic copy.

when you shop online!

Shop at Amazon? AmazonSmile is a website operated by Amazon with the same products, prices and shopping features as Amazon.co.uk. The difference is that when you shop on AmazonSmile,

Amazon will donate 0.5% of the net purchase price (excluding VAT, returns and shipping fees) from your eligible AmazonSmile purchases.



It doesn't cost to register, and it doesn't cost extra when you shop. Only Charities registered in England and Wales can sign up to benefit from the scheme. For all of the details on how to register, or how to support a charity of your choice (you can select Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs if you are unable to register your setting), visit <https://blog.aboutamazon.com/community/how-to-sign-up-for-amazon-smile>

Just remember to shop through the [www.smileamazon.co.uk](http://www.smileamazon.co.uk) link to start raising money for your chosen charity!

### Are you aware of the PayPal Giving Fund?

PayPal Giving Fund helps people support their favourite charities online and helps charities raise funds through PayPal, eBay and other technology platforms. To access, you must be a Registered Charity with a PayPal account (which is straightforward to setup).

You can get information on how to register and how to receive donations at <https://www.paypal.com/uk/webapps/mpp/givingfund/home>



Again, if you are unable to register for this service, Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs is registered, and appreciates your support; just search for us when you make purchases that offer the PayPal Giving Fund (such as on Ebay).

Good luck!



# Projects

## Tesco Centenary Gardening Project by Craig Thomas

Following on from the last edition's piece about growing your own, and to tie in with the wellbeing theme within this edition, we are publishing a piece written by my Dad. Whilst this is not directly related to children (although my Dad is the biggest kid I know!), it shows what can be achieved with a little effort and the positive impact that a small amount of gardening / growing can have on wellbeing.

**Lockdown Isolation** - that's us I'm afraid. I'm 68 years old and suffer with a chest disease COPD unfortunately, which limits my activities. We are fortunate to have a comfortable home and a patio in the back garden where we sit, weather permitting.

This patio has become our haven in these past few months, an area we took for granted for too long and probably neglected over the years. This time of lockdown has encouraged me to change that. I have spent some time jet-washing the patio and walls, improving the appearance a lot. The shed, which had become a dumping ground over the years has been sorted out, and I found a lot of things I had forgotten about, including some old plant pots.

I have never really had a big interest in gardening, and having suffered with hayfever my entire life grass and flowers can affect me quite badly, but my son decided to bring over some seeds and compost so that I

could potter about. I started off with packets of radish, lettuce and spring onion, which I'm told cost about 50p each. I placed these seeds into small pots and waited eagerly for them to sprout. After about 10 days seeds raised their heads into a sunny world and I then transplanted these into some bigger pots where they are now flourishing. My wife takes great delight in seeing them grow as the days go by. I have since planted more seeds into the starter pots and hopefully these will be as successful as the first. Since seeing my attempts, my son has brought over more soil and larger pots, and I am now also growing potatoes and carrots in addition to the salad, something I never thought I could do in a small garden.

In normal times I would not have thought of doing this, but it has given me something to focus on and I look forward to seeing the daily development. I believe people who are vulnerable need an interest, however small, and I have really enjoyed my effort which has also added some colour to my garden – Dennis Thomas



Don't forget, lots salad vegetables can be planted throughout the summer months and are often ready to eat in 4-6 weeks from planting. They don't need a big space and can be successfully grown in recycled containers – cut bottles, food containers etc.



## Helping Clubs following the Covid-19 Lockdown Thanks to the National Lottery Community Fund

On 3rd June, Kirsty Williams MS, Minister for Education, announced plans for the next phase of education **and Childcare** in Wales with children beginning to return to schools, and **Childcare Settings** able to increase the number of children they care for from 29th June (subsequently brought forward to 22nd). Welsh Government also published their guidance for the sector 'Protective Measures for Childcare Settings'.

You told us in phone calls, emails and in our survey what resources you needed to help you re-open following the Covid 19 lockdown and Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs responded. The capacity of the organisation to create such a volume of quality resources has been massively expanded thanks to funding from The National Lottery Community Fund. If there is anything else you feel would be useful for your sector as we continue to work towards re-opening, or you are able to give feedback on resources developed, please let us know. Our staff are here to help you. **Keep smiling, keep playing #Diolch!**

- **Re-Opening Following Temporary Closure (COVID-19) and Checklist** - to address how to prepare to re-open, and address changes to key policies and procedures whilst social distancing guidelines are in place.
- **Parents' Questionnaire** - to determine take up of places on re-opening.
- **Playworking after Covid-19** - some great guidance and lots of ideas to support you through this process of introducing children and young people back into the play environment, whilst taking into account the new social distancing and infection control guidelines.
- **Covid-19: Risk Assessment Plan** – for identifying, addressing and reporting any Covid-19 hazards.
- **Template for Cleaning Systems** - to consider communal areas and frequently used areas, outlining who is responsible for cleaning and how frequently cleaning will need to occur.
- **Temporary Closure of Club Policy** – if due to unforeseen circumstances, a Club needs to close.
- **Promoting Children's Positive Mental Health and Wellbeing**

In our survey, you also indicated you needed help with funding. Whilst providing essential services to support the recovering economy, the Childcare Sector faces an anticipated drop in take up. A rise in unemployment, affordability issues (particularly with uncertainty over the Childcare Offer), parent/carer fears

over sending children back to schools/ childcare and more employers considering home working as short (and in some cases longer) term solutions are all likely to have a detrimental effect on our sector. We have also therefore developed the following resources around funding and finances. Our marketing and governance resources are currently in development.

### Funding and finances

- Cashflow forecasts to predict income and expenditure (also needed if making funding applications).
- Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis.
- Funding sources.
- Top tips for making strong funding applications.
- Preparing accounts.

### Marketing

- Engaging with families.
- Questionnaire assessing parental need in the lead up to Clubs' re-opening.
- Setting up social media.
- Creating a marketing strategy.

### Staffing

- Staff recruitment and retention.
- Workforce planning.
- Supervision and appraisal.
- Mental health support.
- Team building.

### Governance

- Committee recruitment, including template letter to local businesses/ community.
- Protecting committee members.

Thanks to The National Lottery Community Fund for helping us respond to what Clubs have told us they need to face the challenge of re-opening after Covid-19, and to build on the strengths

and experiences of Settings that are operating through Covid-19 for vulnerable children and those of critical workers.

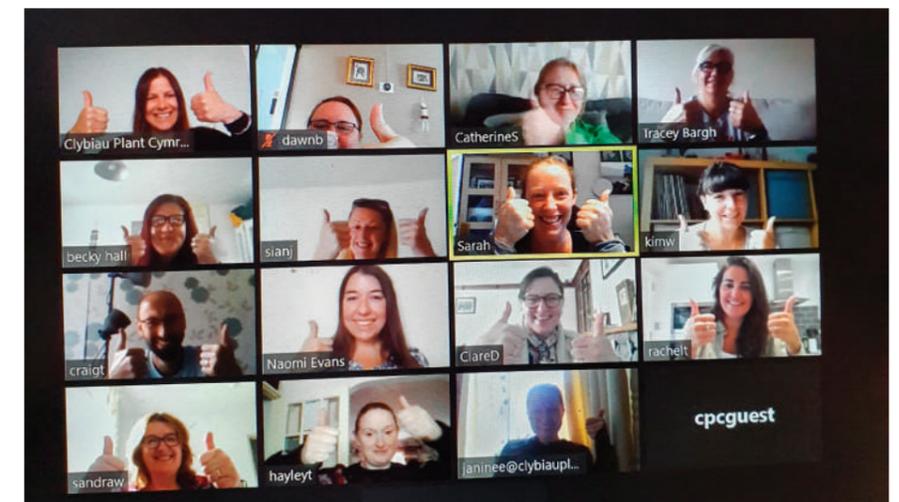
*"Thank you for your very useful & proactive support. Thank you for being so approachable and helpful. Clybiau is worth their weight in gold."*  
After School Club, Headteacher, Wrexham.

*"Thank you, for all your help and support it means a lot to me and our club don't know where we would be without you"* After School Club, Neath Port Talbot

*"Would just like to say a special thank you for the support received from Rebecca Hall, during this time, her advice has been so welcome and helpful during this time. Thank you."*  
After School Club, Monmouthshire

If there is any information, guidance or resources you feel would be useful for your sector at this time, please get in touch! <https://www.clybiauplantcymru.org/news-more.asp?nid=364>  
[www.facebook.com/clybiau](https://www.facebook.com/clybiau)

If you would like to become a member visit <https://www.clybiauplantcymru.org/about-us.asp>



# Supporting the Workforce with Mental Health and Wellbeing

The physical symptoms and details of how the COVID-19 virus can and has affected people have been widely discussed. What has also become apparent is the effect the pandemic and subsequent lockdown has had on people's mental health. Fears of the pandemic itself, uncertainty around finances as a result of lockdown and the isolation that people have had to endure has the potential to cause stress, anxiety and depression. These concerns are prevalent in both adults and children alike. As employers, you have a duty and responsibility to support your employee's health and wellbeing as well as the responsibility to support this with the children you care for. Some Settings may have already reopened and will have experienced the effects the virus has had on its employees but it is important to bear in mind that sometimes the effects of a trauma can appear long after the trauma has occurred. This fear and stress could be ongoing or manifest long after you have reopened, particularly if there are ongoing considerations in relation to staffing levels, social distancing and threat of redundancies.

Employment Law states that there is an implied duty to take reasonable care of the health and safety of employees and this includes mental health. For employees with long term mental health conditions, employers have duties under the Equality Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments to support those employees.

There can be risks to your business if employees don't feel supported with their mental health or wellbeing and these can include:

- Unhappy or under productive workforce
- A drop in work standards
- Increased sickness and absences

There are strategies that you can put in place to support your workforce and in turn ensuring you avoid these risks. It is also not just about business; it is about being humane and supporting those who are suffering. It is important to remember to be fair, be reasonable and be kind.

To support you in supporting your staff here are some tips and links for further information that you can use.

## Ensure there are opportunities for regular supervision

As part of Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) regulations, you need to provide regular supervision. Taking into account the effects that COVID-19 could have on a person's mental health, it may be beneficial to hold more regular supervisions to ensure staff have ample opportunity to talk about anything they are worried about. Remember sometimes just being able to say a worry out loud and know that it has been heard and given reassurance that it is valid can make a big difference.

## Regular staff meetings

It is important to have an open dialogue and ensure you are communicating openly with staff. Alleviate worries around personal safety by informing them about Personal Protective

Equipment (PPE) and social distancing and listening to their concerns. Have a standing item on the agenda where you allow staff to talk openly about anxieties and stress. This will create a culture of openness and the more staff feel they are able to share their feelings, the more opportunity we will have in society to move away from the taboo of talking about mental health.

## Involve staff in decisions

When staff feel involved in the organisation it increases motivation – see article on staff engagement in this edition of Y Bont.

## Have a dedicated member of staff who is the lead for wellbeing

Utilise the skills of your workforce by asking someone to volunteer to lead on wellbeing. There could be someone in your organisation who has a passion for this and the skills to support someone who is anxious. There are a variety of training opportunities to enhance understanding of Mental Health and Wellbeing, some targeted at employees and some at Managers. Investing in professional development opportunities, particularly for a member of staff who is going to lead on wellbeing, is a great way to support staff to support each other and understand how anxiety can be managed.

## Invite a speaker

This could be part of your organisation's continued professional development. It could be a training event and if social distancing is still in place a lot of these speakers will be able to provide their services through a platform like Zoom. You can get more information about speakers by emailing Mind ([work@mind.org.uk](mailto:work@mind.org.uk)).

## Team building

Arrange opportunities for team building exercises. These can be fun activities that can relieve some underlying tension/fears generated from the pandemic. (See the article on team building in this edition for ideas)

## Signposting

Here are some techniques that can be used to support anxiety and wellbeing that you can signpost staff to.



**Mindfulness:** This is a technique that allows you to become more aware of what is happening in the present moment in your mind body and surroundings without judgement. It aims to help you become more self-aware, feel calmer and less stressed and to make you feel able to choose how to respond to thoughts and feelings. You can access information and videos to support with mindfulness online and there are also free apps that you can download.

**Sophrology:** Sophrology is a structured method created to produce optimal health and well-being. It consists of a series of easy-to-do physical and mental exercises that, when practiced regularly, lead to a healthy, relaxed body and a calm, alert mind. Further information can be found online.

**NHS approved apps:** NHS have collated a list of apps to support with mental health. These are reviewed regularly by the NHS. You can find the list on NHS direct by searching mental health apps. Here are few you may find useful:

- **Feeling Good: Positive Mindset.** This app is designed to relax your body and mind using relaxation audio to help build confidence, energy and mindset
- **My Possible Self: The Mental Health App.** This app uses simple learning modules to manage fear, anxiety and stress. You can record your experiences and track symptoms for a better understanding of your own mental health
- **Stress & Anxiety Companion:** This app helps you handle stress and anxiety on-the-go. Using breathing exercises, relaxing music and games designed to calm the mind, the app helps you change negative thoughts to help you better cope with life's ups and downs.

Remember, you are not trained therapists and if you are concerned about someone's mental health **always** advise them to seek help from their GP, be supportive and reassuring, remind them it is nothing to be ashamed of. It is important to support your staff through these difficult times but make sure you are checking on yourself too; be kind to yourself.

# Supporting children with anxieties and worries

The Coronavirus pandemic brought a lot of change and uncertainty to people's lives, including that of children and young people. With lockdown, children spent an unprecedented amount of time in isolation seeing only the family they lived with. Even with lockdown restrictions being eased they were still told they could not touch friends and other family members, they can visit in the garden but you must stay away. All of this has the potential to cause a lot of anxiety and worry. Some children may have developed fears of being physically close to people, they could become more anxious about hygiene or they could find it difficult to reform relationships. All of this can manifest itself with challenging behaviour and it is important that you are able to support this. Below are a few ideas of how to support children with anxieties and worries.

**Recapping Routine:** Whilst the session will be generally flexible to support children's free play a simple way to support children to settle back into Settings is to recap on things that happen and when, for example, registration, snack, going home. Consider using either a picture or a written routine (or both) that can be displayed for the children to easily access. To start with snack routines may need to be more flexible to account for the fact that children have been at home and eating and snacking at different times.

Snack time can be the perfect opportunity to support children's well-being, not only through providing a healthy and nutritious snack, but by supporting positive social wellbeing. Encourage staff to sit with the children as a whole group if this is possible within social distancing guidelines with spacing required. For some children the routine of sitting at a table for mealtimes may have been lost during the pandemic. Outdoor picnics at snack time could be a useful tool for supporting social distancing in a fun way!

**Praise -** Recognise positive choices and behaviours that children make. If you notice a child doing something well or being kind to another person, let them know you are proud of them. That little bit of praise can go a long way and really boost a child's confidence.

**Communication with children –** listen and make time to talk. Children may look to familiar adults to help them make sense of what's happening, particularly during times of uncertainty. By making time to talk and giving children opportunities to ask questions, you can help them to explore their thoughts and feelings. Through creating Club rules, sitting and chatting with children at snack times, watching how children play and creating a relaxing area for children, you will be providing opportunities to understand how children are coping. It is important to consider the language staff and children use and avoid using language or phrases that may scaremonger or cause confusion.

**Physical Activity –** We all know the benefits of physical activity for maintaining a healthy weight but we often overlook the benefits it can have on mental health – even in children. Physical activity releases "feel good" brain chemicals (endorphins), which can help relieve stress and anxiety or anger and tension. It can also aid sleep patterns which children may have fallen out of over the weeks at home. Whether it be through sports, games, dance, yoga or simply walking, try and include plenty of physical activity opportunities for children to engage in each day. You could set the children challenges around physical play to help build confidence and a sense of achievement.

**Take a moment:** When things start getting too much encourage the children to count back from 4 with this exercise. Get them to stop and look around and notice 4 things that they can see, then three things they can hear, then two things they can touch and finally one thing that

they can smell. Encourage them to say these things out loud. Sometimes focusing on what is around them can help them refocus their thinking.

**Handprint breathing:** There are lots of different techniques that children could use to help them to concentrate and focus on their breathing. These techniques are useful in helping them to calm down and to feel less anxious or worried. For this simple technique get them to stretch their hand out and simply run a finger from their opposite hand up one side of their finger and down the other side, breathing in as they go up their finger and breathing out as they go down their finger, do this until they have gone all around their hand or until they have calmed down. You could get each child to draw around their own hand and decorate it and you could laminate these to put on the walls.

**Worry jars, worry / question walls or worry monsters:** consider providing a space or a place for children to display or to put their worries. Maybe turn a box into a swallowing worry monster who the children can feed their worries to. Encourage them to put their names on their worries and provide them with the option as to who they would prefer to talk about it with, if they would like. Having a display of worries can also show children that they are not alone in worrying about things and may show common worries, this method may stop some children from joining in though so consider what will work best for your Setting

Here are some useful links  
Young Minds <https://youngminds.org.uk/>  
Place2Be <https://www.place2be.org.uk/>  
Child Mind Institute <https://childmind.org/article/what-to-do-and-not-to-do-when-children-are-anxious/>  
Institute of Education <https://ioelondonblog.wordpress.com/2020/05/11/what-should-teachers-be-prepared-for-when-young-children-return-after-lockdown-lessons-from-china-and-elsewhere/>

## Health and safety ideas for supporting children in Out of School Childcare Clubs

### Set up a wellbeing station

#### Resources needed:

- Small table top bin or a large foot pedal bin
- Box of tissues
- A mirror

Encourage children to develop their self-help skills, particularly younger children in the Club. They can use the mirror to look at themselves blowing/wiping their noses throughout the session. This will support independence and promote self-esteem; they will be learning positive ways of taking care of themselves and their personal hygiene. Children need to be shown and encouraged to follow positive hygiene routines and this step by step

process will enable children to develop a clear understanding of looking after their noses. The wellbeing station has everything the children need to contain transmission of germs. Encourage children to use bins with lids that have pedal feet by using their foot for larger bins or with smaller bins, using an elbow rather than hands.

Position the wellbeing station near the toilet location and encourage hand washing after the children have used the tissues to wipe or blow their noses. Alternatively, you could use a hand sanitiser if the toilets are not easily accessible. Ensure the bin contents are disposed of safely and sanitise the area frequently.



# Meet the Team -Lockdown Special



**What has been the best thing about Lockdown?**

"Learning just how adaptable and resilient the team of staff I have supporting me are"  
"Great community spirit, spending more time chatting to neighbours, daily walks and bike rides and being able to work from home and get up/have tea with my children."



"Life hasn't been such a rush."  
"It has been the first time in my marriage that I have spent 24 hours a day 7 days a week with my husband for such a long period of time and I am impressed we haven't driven each other mad!"



"Developing my new cut flower garden."  
"Walking and being out in the woods everyday with my boys and partner. Those are the moments, when everyone is happy and playing hide and seek, that I will remember and make it all worth it."

**Have you made any strange Online purchases?**

"Not strange as such but my capacity to be able to place an online order seems to have somewhat diminished! A bit embarrassed to say, but orders delivered to home address when isolating with my partner 40+ miles away or ordering double the quantity of things! The most embarrassing was ordering a case of wine and sending it to next door but 1 and having to ask them to let me know when it arrives so I could collect it (had only met them once previously!). Not sure what they thought of me, I decided against ordering more wine at that point!"



**What has been the worst thing about Lockdown?**

"Missing being able to see my kids and give them a big cwch. Neither live with me and both have been working throughout as a Paramedic and a Teaching Assistant."  
"The lack of structure in my day, working from home: home and work life have blended together, and I have found it difficult to be able to separate the two."  
"Not being able to see people, particularly people I care a lot about that have gone through some tough times during lockdown."  
"Not being able to see our granddaughter who is nearly 1, as well as not being able to visit my Mum"  
"Eating too much!"  
"Trying to teach year 7 maths!"  
"Not being able to hug my 91-year-old Grandmother"

"A singing toothbrush!"  
"A box of 'anti-virus wipes' - which were 1-inch square!"  
"I am on first name terms with the Amazon delivery driver (thank goodness I can raise some money for Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs by using Amazon Smile!!) The silliest purchase was probably a butter dish... I didn't read the description properly, and when it arrived, it was a doll size butter dish! Never mind, my daughter is now using it to keep the frogs that she has in the garden!"  
"Spent £100 on flowers for my garden - but the lack of Greggs purchases has cut my outgoings in half!"

**What have you missed the most?**

"I've missed being able to see my daughter and my Mum, face time is great, but a hug is better."  
"Being able to meet up with friends and family - I am a big fan of cwches and my kids are getting sick of giving them to me now!"  
"Conversation with adults!"  
"My family, friends, workmates and Pav's face :)"

**What have you learned / will incorporate into your life - after Lockdown?**

"I will incorporate a slower pace after lockdown and take advantage more of what we have locally."  
"Video calling and quiz nights - it is a great way of keeping in touch, particularly with friends that live further away"  
"Exercise is key to my mood!"  
"Don't get stressed about housework! It will get done eventually, even if you must look at it every day whilst working from home!"  
"Put a lock on the fridge and keep away from the Toaster!"  
"Make time for small but precious moments"

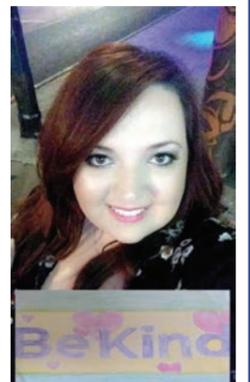


**What's your Tip for surviving Lockdown?**

"Be kind to yourself, understand that we all have good and bad days and it is ok not to be alright all of the time."  
"Do things that make you laugh and play as much as possible!"  
"Lots and lots of fresh air; talking to others on the phone, video link, on our walk and over the garden fence; limiting negative news and social media"  
"If I say wine, is that bad?!"  
"Remember that it won't last forever!"  
"Get dressed every morning, this gives you a positive mindset for the day. Get out of your "Depressing gown" (dressing gown)"  
"Don't have expectations about perfections, just do what you can to support and maintain your own and your family's health and well-being, try not to worry about mess, things that need doing and just take moments to breathe"

**What have you missed the least?**

"I now realise that I do not need to print everything, and I can embrace technology and read and retain things accessing them online!"  
"Hustle and the bustle of normal life"  
"Wearing work shoes"  
"Traffic Jams"  
"The A470!"



# Team Building

The stresses and challenges that the outbreak of COVID-19 brought with it on both a business and individual level have supported heightened team work and feelings of togetherness in some cases, and in other cases have resulted in reduced feelings of connectedness, possible tensions and negativity. Anxieties about the pandemic, stress about employment status, resentment over being furloughed or not being furloughed and other personal circumstances may have led in some situations to strain on working relationships and dynamics. The impact of COVID-19 is likely to last into the Autumn term for many businesses, and consequently it is essential for employers and Managers to look at ways to support their team through these challenges.

Employee morale and teamwork are essential ingredients for successful businesses, but can be negatively impacted by factors including team conflict, perceived favouritism, lack of confidence in Managers, micro management and poor communication. Whilst support to individuals is valuable for maintaining motivation and morale (e.g. through supervisions), building and strengthening relationships within the team is also essential to encourage a happy, motivated workforce.

## Good Teams:

- Respect each other
- Recognise the input each team member has
- Support each other
- Celebrate each other's success
- Communicate clearly, concisely and in a timely manner
- Have a diverse range of skills that are celebrated
- Have a strong, fair leader who manages and reviews workloads and contributions
- Understand and believe in their common goals
- Have fun!

This feeling of 'belonging' and teamwork unites staff around their purpose as they strive to deliver on business objectives. It creates ownership over their role, engagement in tasks and commitment to the team and business as a whole, as well as supporting mental health. Whilst it is not essential for everyone to be 'friends', it is essential that everyone recognises each other's value, treats everyone in the team with respect and learns to work with team members in a professional way.

Team Building exercises/activities are a good way of developing these relationships. We have gathered some ideas below, however the best starting point is to ask your team what they think would work. Different activities may suit different personality types, and whilst it is great if everyone can find common ground, it may be a case of varying the activities so that everyone has something that they enjoy. These activities and the way in which they are carried out may be subject to social distancing guidelines, so they would need to be considered in line with these at any given time.

**Quizzes** – team quizzes can be done in person as part of staff meetings, extended lunch breaks or nights out, but they can also be done remotely utilising platforms such as Microsoft Teams, Zoom, Skype or Facebook Messenger. Quizzes could involve having one member of staff as a 'Quiz Master' who prepares the quiz in advance, or encouraging all staff members to write a set number of questions to 'host' their own round during the Quiz. There are a multitude of topics that can be covered (you could even incorporate Safeguarding/Playwork topics as a way of refreshing knowledge!), but you can also introduce some rounds with a difference such as Scavenger Hunt rounds, ingredient rounds (listing ingredients for a specific meal/cocktail with staff members needing to name what the ingredients make), cockney rhyming slang rounds, advertising rounds (name the brand attached to each slogan) and riddles.

**Afternoon Tea** – afternoon tea can be a nice way of coming together as a team to chat over coffee/tea and cakes, or drinks and burgers if that is the preference! This can even take place remotely (either due to limits to socialising with COVID-19 or to facilitate wider engagement on a longer-term basis)

**Charity Work** – having a team goal outside of typical day to day work can support team building, such as raising money for a charity that means something to you as a team, or even organising a fundraising event for your own business if you are a charity. This could be a bingo night, organising a meal/curry night, or taking part in a wider event such as a race (e.g. Pretty Muddy, local marathons). Those team members who do not wish (or are not able) to take part can still be on the side lines cheering their team mates on, or supporting with planning/fundraising for the event.

**Classes/Skill Development** – as a team you could take part in classes or skill development, which could be done in person or remotely. You could utilise external 'teachers'/providers (or apps e.g. Duolingo for language development), or individuals from the team could pass on their own skills and knowledge. You could set goals, or challenges with rewards, and there are a whole host of topics that could be covered e.g. dance, cookery, sewing, pottery, language learning, book club.

**Picnic and outdoor games** – with British weather, plans for 'outdoor' team building may need to be flexible, but there are a multitude of benefits to getting outside for fresh air (and exercise). Depending on the hours that your sessions/provision runs, this could be done during the day before Club or in between sessions, on the weekend, or even during a session involving children too. Featuring a bring your own, or bring a plate picnic, and some fun games such as rounders, sports day challenges, darts, boules, or 'childhood games' (e.g. duck duck goose).

**Nights Out** – once socialising in public places is possible, a great way of team building can be through getting together outside of work hours in the evening. The type of night out may vary depending on personality types and preferences, but could involve a meal out, a

karaoke night, a cocktail night or a night out dancing.

**Online Games** – with the outbreak of COVID-19, a multitude of online gaming options have been created, some of which are suitable for use within video calling platforms through screen sharing. Good Housekeeping featured an article about some of the fun options available, and other ideas can be found through a Google Search. Scattergories is a fun way of introducing some competition and quick thinking, by sending a link to all participants and working against a timer. You could also play games such as 'Two Truths and a Lie' with a bit of advanced preparation from team members!

**Escape Rooms** – escape rooms can be a fun team building exercise, and there are also online alternatives whilst social distancing measures are in place (free and paid options available).

These Team Building activities/events shouldn't be tokenistic or a tick box exercise and should not be done once and then forgotten about. The best way of promoting team spirit and connectedness is by making team building a **regular, consistent feature**, with weekly/bi-weekly/monthly activities.

There are also activities that you could feature within team meetings to support staff to recognise the benefit and importance of teamwork. All of the activities below support reflection and reiterate that individuals alone can only achieve so much – partnership/team working is essential to success:

**Blindfolded activity** – partner up your team members and provide them with a task (e.g. making something, or navigating an obstacle course). One member of each partnership is blindfolded, with the other becoming their 'eyes', and with communication and teamwork essential to complete the task successfully.

**One-handed activity** – partner up your team members and provide them with a task (e.g. making a paper airplane) that they have to do one-handed. They will have to work together to achieve the task, communicating and problem solving as a pair.

**Affirmations/Colleague Compliments** – provide all staff members with several small pieces of paper, or post it notes, and encourage them to write something positive about each of their teammates. Each member of your team will have an envelope of positive things about them written by their colleagues to take home and keep, or you could even create individual 'positivity posters' for each member of your team containing the quotes.

**Every player plays their part** – look at a successful 'output' of your business (e.g. a well-developed, happy child that has attended a session) and discuss how each member of your team plays an essential part in that output, whether it be in relation to specific procedures necessary to the day to day operation, to the provision of play ideas/experiences, the provision of meals/snacks, or to access a clean and hygienic environment. Reflect on how each role contributes to the experience of the child.

# Recognising and Celebrating Staff Dedication and Good Practice

Celebrating the 'good' and all the ways in which staff members excel, whether that be meeting targets or exceeding them, is important in supporting morale and loyalty to a business and its aims. In a survey conducted by Investors in People (2017) it was found that nearly 1 in 3 workers were unhappy in their current job role, with the top 4 reasons being:

1. Pay
2. Management (e.g. unfair treatment and favouritism, failure to listen to concerns, bad attitude)
3. Not being valued – employees that do not feel valued are two times more likely to be job hunting
4. Lack of career progression (perceived/actual)

Losing employees costs businesses – not just the financial implications of recruitment, but also a loss of time invested in inducting and training one employee and having to repeat this with new employees. With 'being valued' key to job satisfaction and feeling undervalued linked with employees terminating their employment, recognising and celebrating staff dedication and good practice should be a focus of all employers to support a happy workforce. There are several ways that this can be implemented and one of the key things, much like with team building, is avoiding temporary and tokenistic behaviour and instead making words and actions that support feelings of value central to the ethos of your business.

**1. Peer Appreciation** – create a way of staff members celebrating each other, perhaps through a 'Shout Out' board in the staff room featuring photos of all staff members and post its. Staff members will sometimes observe good practice that you as a Manager have missed and it is also a good way of promoting team relationships

**2. Pay incentives** – having bonuses or pay rises attached to specific achievements or criteria can improve morale and be a good way of celebrating success. In the Childcare and Play Sector this is often attached to achieving qualifications. It is essential that this is managed in a way that is fair and equitable to prevent claims of favouritism, and with limited budgets it is not always possible financially and should always be considered in line with sustainability of the business.

**3. Reward schemes** – some employers recognise dedication (e.g. employees who have been with an organisation for a certain length of time) through signing up to specific reward schemes e.g. Perkbox.

**4. Saying thank you** – as lovely as it would be to be able to pay out bonuses, within the Childcare and Play Sector this is not typically possible. However, simply ensuring that you thank staff is a way of acknowledging their hard work and can help them feel 'seen' and valued. Where a staff member does not always fulfil their potential, thanking them for a specific task that they have done well can encourage more positive behaviour and motivation. It is also important to recognise staff who consistently work hard, to ensure that their motivation is maintained. Sometimes setting aside time to

speaking to a staff member to say "I have noticed how much you are doing and how hard you are working. I really appreciate all you are doing" can be the difference between a staff member feeling valued or not.

**5. Responsibility** – recognising staff dedication and hard work through providing an opportunity to lead on a new idea or activity can be good for staff morale and personal development.

**6. Celebrate birthdays** – whether it is bringing a cake to the staff room, encouraging all staff to sign a card or providing staff with a day of annual leave on their birthday, recognising birthdays is one way of celebrating your team and giving something back. This could also be done on 'anniversaries' of commencing work at the Club.

**7. Play Champion** – have a 'Play Champion' of the week/month (with a trophy or certificate as added bonus) to recognise the great work being done to provide quality play experiences for the children in your care

**8. Go public** – extend praise beyond in-house recognition. Including 'Shout Outs' or photos in parent waiting areas or on social media not only demonstrates to parents/carers that you have an excellent workforce, but it also provides additional recognition and motivation for great practice.

**9. Friendly Competition** – If you have a specific team goal (e.g. a fundraising target or developing innovative marketing ideas), you could include some 'friendly competition' such as a tally chart on the staff noticeboard to recognise those doing particularly well (working in small teams or individually). This approach needs to be monitored to ensure it is fair and that it motivates and incentivises staff rather than creating unhealthy competition or a divide in the team.

**10. Awards Nights** – holding an Awards Night that celebrates good practice (awards could even be humorous in nature) can celebrate all that is great about your team, as well as being a great team building opportunity.

**11. Staff room solace** – one way you could recognise team achievements is by purchasing additional 'niceties' for the staff room when

certain targets have been met e.g. biscuits, cake, pizza days, coffee machine

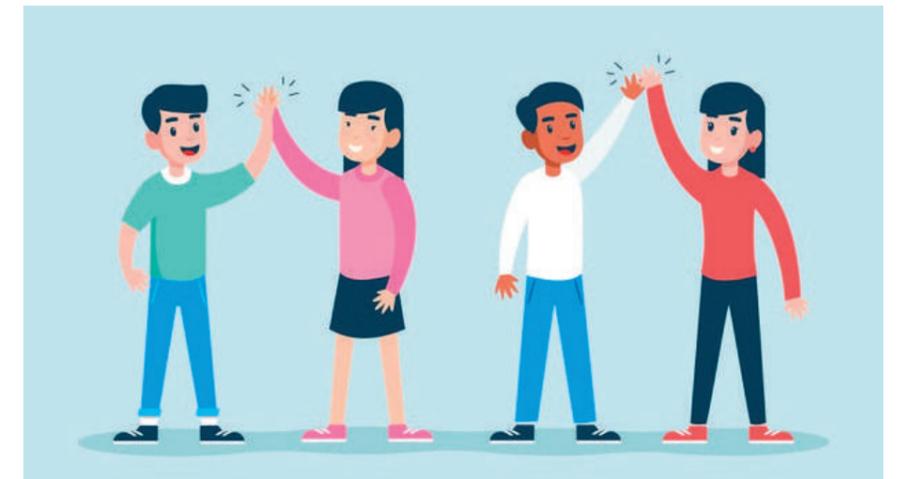
**12. What would you choose?** Always remember that the best way of recognising and celebrating great practice and hard work is doing so in a way that is meaningful to each individual. Have a conversation with staff about what would make them feel valued and see if there is an agreement that can be met, or a suitable alternative that could be offered should their suggestion not be viable for the business.

**13. Mentoring** – recognising staff members who excel at their jobs can be achieved through creating 'peer mentor' roles, particularly when you have new members of staff. This acknowledges the expertise and hard work of long-standing staff members, as well as creating great development opportunities for new staff.

**14. Continual Development** – encourage, support and recognise continuous professional development opportunities and achievements. There are always opportunities to learn and develop and creating a work environment that views these as positive and not as 'unfortunate necessities' or a 'waste of time'. They support staff members to grow and enhances the quality of your service. You could even hold internal awards ceremonies to recognise training attended and qualifications achieved.

**15. Publicly reporting on your impact as a team** – featuring some of the great achievements that your team has supported on social media or on noticeboards within the Setting can help to remind your staff why they do what they do, as well as demonstrating the quality of your provision. How many children have you helped to grow and develop? How much has your Club grown since its inception? What great quotes and feedback have been received from parents/carers and children? Shout about it!

**16. Rewards and gifts** – if there are the funds to do so, could there be rewards/gifts for particularly excellent work? This could be a water bottle or pen (complete with the Club logo if you have one!) or a small gift chosen for the specific individual based on their interests/likes.



# Employment Updates

There have been some changes since the last edition of Y Bont, and some to come, so here is a quick summary!

## Coronavirus Act – March 2020

A bill containing a wide-ranging set of provisions giving the Government temporary emergency powers to respond to the Coronavirus pandemic by regulation was debated in Parliament on 23 March and became law on 25 March.

One set of regulations, the Health Protection (Coronavirus) Regulations 2020, bring into law some of the employment measures already announced by the Government. The Government now has the power to make further regulations that will allow:

- employers to recover the additional statutory sick pay paid out due to the scrapping of the 3-day waiting period (see 'SSP amendment above')
- rebating to be extended to larger businesses, if necessary
- the amount of rebate payable to be increased or decreased.

Other measures include a new statutory right to take emergency volunteer leave to help in health or social care for workers certified as appropriate by a local authority, the NHS, or the Department of Health, and working in businesses with 10 or more staff.

Workers can take the leave in blocks of two, three or four weeks and may take one block of leave in any volunteering period. The first 16-week period begins on the day the legislation takes effect.

Volunteers must give three working days' notice of their intention to take the leave. There are no provisions allowing employers to refuse it. The leave is unpaid but a fund will be established to compensate volunteers for loss of earnings, travel and subsistence. All other terms and conditions other than salary continue during the leave and the volunteer has a right to return to their own job.

The Act also gives the Government the power to restrict events and close down business premises where needed to prevent the transmission of Coronavirus, or to avoid the deployment of medical or emergency staff.

The legislation is limited to two years' duration, although this period can be lengthened or shortened as required, and the measures within it can be brought in, suspended and reactivated in response to current needs.

## Holiday Leave – carry over extended

The government announced a temporary relaxation of the rules on carrying over untaken holiday on this date in response to the COVID-19 emergency. The Working Time (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 allow workers to carry over leave they were unable to take due to the Coronavirus outbreak into the next two leave years.

The relaxation of the rules only applies to the four weeks statutory leave under EU rules. The UK's extra 1.6 weeks' leave can still only be carried over into the next leave year.

Acas guidance says reasons for being unable to take leave could include:

- self-isolating or being too ill to take leave
- being temporarily laid off or 'furloughed'
- having to work through holidays.

The amended regulations had immediate effect, from 27th March.

## National Minimum Wage Current rates

These rates are for the National Living Wage and the National Minimum Wage. The rates change every April.

Year	25 and over	21 to 24	18 to 20	Under 18	Apprentice
April 2020 (current rate)	£8.72	£8.20	£6.45	£4.55	£4.15
April 2019 to March 2020	£8.21	£7.70	£6.15	£4.35	£3.90

## Apprentices

Apprentices are entitled to the apprentice rate if they're either:

- aged under 19
- aged 19 or over and in the first year of their apprenticeship

Visit <https://www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates> for more details

## The importance of staff engagement

Throughout this issue of Y Bont you will have read articles on how to support your staff and their well-being and ways to engage with them through team building, supervisions, appraisals and team meetings. While these are all activities that you should already be doing as part of your Care Inspectorate Wales registration, they also play an important role in staff retention.

The Out of School Childcare workforce currently employs highly qualified, passionate and dedicated individuals and it is important that as a sector we do all that we can to retain that workforce.

Research shows that there are 3 types of employee, these types also indicate the level of commitment the employee has towards their employer;

- Type 1: Actively Engaged
- Type 2: Not Engaged
- Type 3: Actively Disengaged

As an employer your commitment to your employees can have a direct impact on their engagement and commitment to you.

How you engage with and involve your staff in the business of running your Out of School Childcare Club begins the process of getting them to be Actively Engaged. Your also need to make sure that if you are seeking input from the staff that you do something with that information. Even if you decide not to implement their ideas ensure that you are letting the staff know why. Token engagement is the fastest way to Actively Disengage staff.

As an employer actively engaging with employees creates actively engaged employees who are committed to helping their Out of School Childcare Club revive and thrive.



## Working From Home

Whilst much of the Childcare and Play Workforce have been furloughed or have remained working throughout the outbreak of COVID-19 within Childcare hubs or within their Settings, there have been some Playworkers and Managers that have continued to work to support their Out of School Childcare Clubs from home.

Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs staff have continued to work from home throughout the pandemic and have welcomed certain benefits that this has brought with it (no sitting in traffic to get to the office, or needing to use public transport, more family time and being able to pop the washing on during lunch breaks!) but there are also undoubtedly many challenges to home working. Difficulties in maintaining a work life balance and 'switching off', balancing work with children and home-schooling responsibilities, boredom, isolation, difficulties in collaborative working and challenges with developing and utilising new ways of working can all impact on mental health.

There are several things that can support with this balance, outlined on the NHS website:

1. Establishing a routine – this may be different to your typical routine when working at the Club but where possible try to follow normal sleep and work patterns and stay consistent. Even if you are having to alter work times to fit in with caring responsibilities, set a 'timetable' of when you are going to be working, and stick to these times, avoiding where possible being 'contactable at all times' and ensuring that you have sufficient time to switch off and do other things. If balancing home-schooling too, this timetable is essential and preparation is key – get what is needed for tasks in advance - 'individual tasks' can be worked on by your child while you are working yourself. Remember though that you are not superhuman – you can only do so much in a day and the main thing is that your children are happy and healthy (and that you are too!)
2. Have a workspace – find a quiet spot with a desk and suitable chair. If you have a lot of work to complete at a computer, try to ensure that your desk and seat meet visual display unit health and safety requirements and that you are comfortable to avoid long term issues linked to poor posture and lack of back support. If possible, have your workspace away from your sleeping area, as this is better for mental health and good sleep patterns. Even better is if your workspace can be 'shut away' at the end of a working day behind a door to avoid the temptation to log back in and continue working.
3. Take breaks – try to take a proper lunch break each day and if possible, get outside for some fresh air and screen free time. Talk to friends, spend time with family members and avoid checking work emails. Have regular breaks during the day to make a drink or to take a walk around the house. Exercise is a great way of releasing positive endorphins – why not try an online yoga session during your break or a 10-minute work out? If you struggle to take breaks, set yourself alarms or reminders!
4. Stay connected – this goes for colleagues (there are multiple ways of staying in touch: via email, Whatsapp or video calling), your Manager and your friends. If you are finding things tough or feeling isolated, chances are your colleagues feel the same, or have felt the same at certain points. Find ways to support each other – having 'lunch break Zoom sessions' to chat, or weekly quiz sessions. Staying connected is also essential in supporting the morale of colleagues if you are a Line Manager – communicating with staff and ensuring they are kept up to date with developments (whether they are working or on furlough) helps to prevent feelings of isolation and disconnectedness.
5. Set boundaries – have conversations with family members about what boundaries are needed at home to enable you to do your job. This might be a conversation with other adults about caring responsibilities during certain times of the day, or it might be a conversation with children about how long you need to work for, and what fun things you can then do in the breaks/after work. Explain why it is important for you to avoid interruptions at certain points. The same boundaries should be set with colleagues/Managers – when are you working, and when are you taking a break or finished for the day.
6. Set priorities – have a realistic list of what you are going to achieve each day and make your first task the 'worst' thing on that list. Once you have done the toughest task, this gives you a sense of achievement and motivation to get the rest done, rather than doing the easier tasks and then procrastinating because you cannot face the harder task.
7. Be kind to yourself – remember that there is a lot that you have had to process over the past few months and acknowledge that you may not be as productive as normal every day. It is normal to have good days and bad days. Be realistic about what is achievable and try not to punish yourself for the 'bad' days – draw a line under them and move forwards.

## Workforce Planning

Managers and Committees in some Childcare Settings over the coming months, particularly with the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) coming to an end in October, will be reviewing their Workforce, and potentially needing to make some difficult decisions in terms of staffing levels. Whilst Out of School Childcare remains a foundational sector that is essential to the economy, short term changes to parent employment may mean that fewer childcare places are taken up in the autumn, leading to a necessary review of staffing to ensure that the Setting can remain sustainable.

If redundancy becomes a necessity, this is likely to have a negative impact on the mental health and wellbeing not only of employees themselves but also Managers. Consequently, it is essential that you not only provide your staff with support but also seek support yourself. In a previous edition of Y Bont, we discussed Managers of Childcare Settings partnering up as a way of allowing for 'supervisions' for themselves, and this is likely to be one of those occasions where having a support network of other likeminded professionals going through similar challenges is of huge benefit. If you do not already have a relationship with another Setting/s in your area, there are a number of groups on Facebook that you may find beneficial, whilst ensuring that you adhere to GDPR principles in terms of information sharing.

In terms of supporting staff, transparency is key and consultation is an important part of any redundancy process. If you are making more than 20 staff redundant, a 'Collective Consultation' needs to take place spanning at least 30 days (which may have implications in terms of the CJRS coming to an end) between the employer and a trade union or employee representative.

Ensure you review all staff contracts and note the notice periods and pay requirements, as well as the legal minimums for each of these outlined on Gov.UK. It is important to ensure your redundancy selection process is fair, objective and non-discriminatory, following specified criteria.

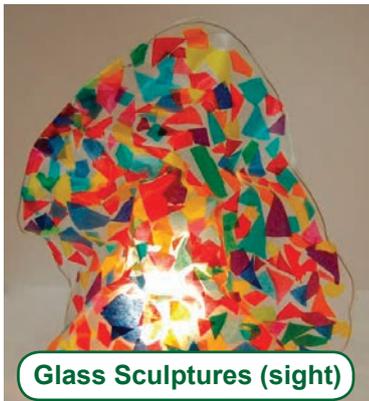
Further support and information can be found through ACAS (<https://www.acas.org.uk/manage-staff-redundancies>) or you can contact an ACAS advisor through their online enquiry form. ACAS has also produced a useful COVID-19 specific map to take employers through the process step by step (<https://acas.frontify.com/d/9XEi1YzDsXxS/n-a#/general/acas-resources-redundancy-process-map>)

You can support your staff through providing counselling, additional supervisions/meetings, help getting financial advice or help finding work for another company. Jobcentre Plus offers a 'Rapid Response Service' to help people get back into work, and can also help employees write or update CVs (email [rs.enquiries@dwp.gov.uk](mailto:rs.enquiries@dwp.gov.uk)). It is important to also remember the mental health of employees who remain (who may feel sadness or even guilt about retaining their employment). We have included useful ideas of how to support the mental health of your staff elsewhere in this issue.

# Activity Ideas



## Fun Low Cost No Cost Activities Around The 5 Senses (Sight, Taste, Smell, Touch and Hearing)



**Glass Sculptures (sight)**

### What you need:

- 1 x long piece of thin gauge wire.
- Lot of pieces of scraps of bright tissue paper – already cut.
- 1 x piece of clear contact paper (sticky back plastic)

### What you need to do:

1. Cut one long piece of thin gauge wire and bend it into a hoop shape.
2. Lay the hoop down onto a large piece of clear sticky back plastic, place the wire 2 to 3cm from the edge of the plastic.
3. Sprinkle bits of tissue paper scraps on top of the sticky back plastic, and lightly press down.
4. Fold the edges of the plastic back over the wire, on top of the tissue paper area.
5. When the sheet is covered in tissue paper and stand the circle up, bending it into different shapes so that it will stand by itself.
6. Place the sculpture either in the window to let the light through or place a torch on the other side to light it up!



**Food Art (taste)**

### What you need:

- A variety of shapes for children to draw round, to create their character or object.
- Bowls filled with fruit and veg, pre-cut into different shapes.

- Various cutting tools. (scissors knives Cookie Cutters etc)

### What you need to do:

1. Offer a selection of shapes (large and small) to draw around (semi-circle, circle, different sized rectangles, squares etc), you could create a character, a rocket or ship...the options are endless.
2. Offer the children pots of fruit and veg; pre-cut some of the food in different shapes. They could include circles, semi-circles, squares, triangle sticks, spiralised etc.
3. Fruit and vegetables could include carrots, cucumber, tomatoes, celery, bananas, strawberries, kiwi fruit and lots more different types that you can think of!
4. You could also offer the children additional foods to make their characters or object, which could include: - bread, crackers, sliced cheese and ham, cocktail sticks, to build their characters and plates to build their characters on.



**Water Xylophone (hearing)**

### What you need:

- Food colouring (4 different colours. This is optional).
- Wooden sticks e.g. chop sticks.
- 4+ jam jars / tumbler glasses.

### What you need to do:

1. Take 4 jars/glasses and fill them with water varying the levels of water (the more you fill the glass the lower the sound / pitch).
2. Add the food colouring (optional).
3. Tap each jar/glass to discover the sound/ pitch.
4. Why don't you experiment with your Water Xylophone? Does tapping the sides of the jam jar make a different sound than tapping the tops of the jars? Why don't you change the water levels to create new sounds? Try using different utensils for tapping the glasses. Can you tell the difference between the wood chopstick and a metal butter knife?



**Spice painting (smell)**

### What you need:

- Pallet.
- Brushes.
- White paint / water.
- Various spices They could include - paprika, turmeric, cardamom, cinnamon, Nutmeg, mixed spice (Exclude Chilli powder for safety reasons).
- Paper.

### What you need to do:

1. Before starting ask the children/ young person to smell the various spice pots, can they identify any?
2. Pour the white paint or the water paint into the pallet.
3. Add the spice. The white paint will make the texture thicker. Less water the deeper the colour.
4. Best smelling picture ever!



**Cornflour slime (touch)**

### What you need:

- Cornflour.
- Liquid soap, water or PVA glue.
- Large bowl.
- Large spoon.

### What you need to do:

1. Pour ½ cup of cornflour in the bowl.
2. Slowly add approximately 4 tbsp of soap, glue or water.
3. Add a few drops of the food colouring into the solution and stir it with the spoon.
4. Begin to mix the slime with your hands.
7. If the slime is too powdery, add more liquid and food colouring.
8. If it is too runny add more cornflour.
9. By adding the glue this will make your slime stretchy. Water will make it runnier, by adding shampoo or body wash will give your slime a nice fragrance.