

Y Bont

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Clybiau
Plant
Cymru



KIDS' CLUBS

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Dear Out of School Childcare Club Member...

Welcome to our Winter edition, which focuses on all things staffing from recruitment to retention, morale, supervision and reflection. We also look at Playwork as a profession as well as participation.

The Out of School Childcare sector continues to revive and with a few more clubs opening during the autumn term the overriding issue we are hearing about is staffing and how hard it is to recruit and to retain staff. Whilst there is immense value in the role of the Playworker and the immeasurable impact you all have on the wellbeing, health and happiness of the children in your care, the perceived increased job-security and earning potential of other sectors along with reduced responsibilities is leading to increasing challenges surrounding recruitment and retention.

As the voice of the sector, we are talking to Welsh Government, Local Authorities and our CWLWM partners to see what we can do to promote the vast opportunities currently available within the Childcare sector as a whole.

During October we celebrated our 20th birthday and received a message from Deputy Minister for Social Services, Julie Morgan, who acknowledged the significant contribution that Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs have made to the sector and *"extended her congratulations and thanks to the staff at and to all those working in our out of school clubs across Wales for their hard work, commitment and resilience over the years and particularly during the Covid-19 pandemic"*.

The Deputy Minister continued to say *"This support is so important in helping our communities access quality out of school provision providing such valuable opportunities for our children to develop their social and emotional skills. These opportunities are needed now more than ever as children reengage with others and with their wider community after the challenges they've experienced during the Covid-19 pandemic. I know the staff in the clubs you support provide so many rich and varied activities for the children who attend as well as allowing them the space and time to choose their own free play."*

I would like to extend thanks to my own staff, without whom none of this support would be possible. They work tirelessly to listen to and support the needs of clubs across Wales, and to ensure that I am able to convey these messages and seek support from those in authority. During October we also held our AGM and published our Impact report for the 20/21 financial year, this demonstrates what an intrinsically motivated team of people we have working with us and the sector can be confident in their support during this next year.

Staff morale and retention are a key focus right now and the market for jobs is saturated with opportunities. We are working hard to ensure



that Playwork is professionalised, alongside those in Early Years roles. During what remains of our winter term and throughout the Spring term we will be making available a whole range of excellent continuous professional development (CPD) opportunities. A team that is consistently learning, looking to extend their knowledge and taking these opportunities helps, not only to deliver quality services that meet children's needs, but also in keeping staff motivated and interested in the role they offer. Our Training team recently had their annual external quality audit (EQA) from NCFE (formerly NCFE CACHE) which checks the overall quality of our Training Team and we received an 'EXCELLENT' grading! With this endorsement and with Welsh Government recognising the role that we deliver in support and as a training provider along with the work that staff in the sector play, making quality opportunities available for children, we have secured additional funding to support this CPD and keep our sector engaged and invigorated for the year to come. So make sure you 'like' our Meta (formerly Facebook) [page](#), sign up for our weekly bulletin and our quarterly newsletter, keep an eye on our [training page](#), and follow us on all social media outlets to ensure you get the latest updates of all we have to offer.

From all at Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs, I would like to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year and to thank you for all you continue to do in supporting children and their families across Wales.

Jane O'Toole
Chief Executive Officer

Merry Christmas, Workforce!

As Managers, your appreciation for your staff is great and at Christmas time you may want to show that appreciation with gifts and celebration. Here are some ideas of things you can gift without breaking too much into your budget.

Involve the children

Why not purchase designing your own mug kits and ask the children to make one for each of the staff members. Baker Ross has "design your own travel mugs". At the time of printing these only cost £18 for a pack of 5. Inexpensive but personal and this would be appreciated.

Christmas Food Hampers

Food hampers needn't be expensive and you can be creative with them or even make them personal to what you know the staff like. This shows you know them well enough to include their favourite chocolates or savouries. It also may save them from purchasing these themselves over Christmas which will save them some expense. For a little extra something why not add some Christmas quizzes or low-cost games that they can play with their families over their time off.

Save throughout the year

Cashflow is always at the fore front of your minds, particularly when running a childcare business and considering the difficulties we have experienced this year money is even more of a thought. Planning ahead can save you putting added strain on your cashflow by purchasing these gifts in one go at Christmas time. They could also avoid the need to use your personal money to ensure you can show the staff your appreciation. If your cashflow forecast allows even putting aside £20 a month from January you could have £220 by November. This may not only cover the cost of some gifts but you could also contribute to a staff meal out.

Christmas dinner

When planning for a staff celebration remember to consider that socialising outside of work may not be something that all staff enjoy. Ensure that all your staff feel comfortable and involved in the arrangements and try to avoid any staff that haven't been a part of any night out feeling isolated when all return and talk about the night out. If opening times and cashflow allow you could look at having a staff meal during the working day, maybe on lunch break having Christmas dinner delivered and making the lunch hour special with crackers and party hats.

Whatever you decide to do, everyone here at Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs wish you and your team Nadolig Llawn a Blwyddn Newydd dda! Thank you for your continued commitment to support families across Wales.



West Wales

Sustainability Opportunities in Swansea

Swansea Council are continuing to support CIW Registered Childcare Settings in Swansea with sustainability through their Children & Young People Fund 2021-2022. For many Settings, this funding has been a lifeline to remain open when business has not been going so well. All Settings face difficult times which can be incredibly disheartening and at times out of their control, but with some forward planning the risks can be reduced somewhat. Though the obvious factor to sustainability is often focused on attendance and having enough children booked in to make ends meet, the last few months have highlighted other issues clubs

are facing that affect sustainability. Staffing issues appear to be a bigger factor in Settings sustainability following the pandemic, with issues around staff recruitment, staff sickness or staff self-isolating, poorly children of staff meaning staff need time off work and changes to family priorities resulting in staff opting for family time instead of overtime – something Holiday Provision experienced in particular, over the Summer.

Many Settings spoken to have had to consider ways to support their employees whilst retaining a sustainable service for families - looking

at staff incentives, a pay increase, flexible working, reviewing contracts, annual leave and staff recruitment - all whilst maintaining staff morale and making ends meet, something which can be challenging for employers.

For any CIW registered Settings in Swansea facing similar issues and require sustainability support through the Children & Young People Fund then please contact your Swansea Childcare Business Development Officer on sianj@clybiauplantcymru.org to discuss further.

New Club Achieves Charitable Incorporated Organisation Status with Charity Commission

Congratulations to Narberth CP School on recently registering their new Club as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). This means that:

- Committee members are protected. As it is incorporated, the individuals involved are not exposed to the possibility of having to meet any liabilities personally if it fails (except in instances of their own serious wrongdoing).
- Clubs with charitable aims and an annual income higher than the threshold (£5,000) must register with the Charity Commission. The CIO model is a simplified, streamlined model of achieving both charity status and incorporation and Clubs are only regulated by Charity Commission.
- Enhanced reputation as it is regulated by the Charity Commission.
- Easier to recruit committee members as this model better protects them.
- Charities receive tax relief.
- Access to more grants and funding.
- Profit can still be kept to meet the needs of the communities the Club serves.

We are supporting many other voluntary managed committees (VMC) across West Wales to become a CIO and welcome any enquiries from other settings wishing to make this change. Please get in touch if this is something your setting would like to consider by contacting janinee@clybiauplantcymru.org for further support.

Need to contact us?

You can contact the West Wales team by phone on 01269 831010, by email: info-ww@clybiauplantcymru.org by post: Unit 2 Clos Gelliwerdd, Cross Hands, Carmarthenshire. SA14 6RX.

Supporting the Recruitment of Playworkers

We know that the sector is facing challenges recruiting and retaining Playworkers. Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs is able to support you in the following ways:

- Advertising vacancies for free on our weekly bulletins and website.
- Providing bilingual application paperwork that can be adapted such as job descriptions, application forms, interview questions, letters offering positions.
- Other staff policies, procedures and templates in Step 11 of Stepping Out.
- Business skills mentoring on a wide range of staffing related topics.
- Staffing related webinars and 'Clwb Hwbs'. Visit Training / Events | Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs.

There are a number of ways settings have been recruiting new Playworkers and Managers:

- Using popular portals such as indeed, FIS/Dewis Cymru and our Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs website to maximise reach and engagement.
- Promoting vacancies within local schools, parents and carers, and on social media.
- Collaborating with local settings to share staff, where practical, including staff that can be used as relief/bank staff.
- Considering whether you can afford paying higher wages, reflective of the responsibility and importance of Playworkers' role, by developing a cashflow forecast. Your Childcare Business Development Officer can support you to develop a cashflow forecast to determine whether any expenditure can be reduced and money saved and whether fees can be increased in order to supplement staff wages or pay for benefits to retain and recruit Playworkers.
- In line with the National Minimum Standards, considering whether Playworkers can be recruited, whilst

achieving Playwork qualifications in post. The Award in Transition to Playwork (from Early Years) is now open to a wider audience so those with a level 3 in early years, support, teaching and learning in schools, forest school, youth work are now eligible to access this qualification which can be achieved in 12 weeks. Funded Playwork Apprenticeships at levels 2, 3 and 5 are also available. Similarly, Welsh language learning and support can be provided through the Camau project and Welsh language skills can be improved whilst in post.

- Working to market your club effectively so that attendance can be maximised and that regular income can support higher wages or staff benefits.
- Making your Club a great place to work! Remember to thank your Playworkers, showing appreciation regularly. Read our articles Merry Christmas Workforce for ideas to show appreciation with gifts and celebration, Boosting Staff Morale, Creating an Inclusive Workplace and Safe Recruitment.

If you are facing particular challenges and/or have ideas for possible solutions that you would like us to put forward on your behalf, then please don't hesitate to get in touch. As a collective the sector needs to support one other through these difficult times.

Pembrokeshire outdoor / PPE Hampers

There are currently outdoor/PPE resource hampers available from Pembrokeshire Local Authority. A simple application, with no financial details is required. The size of the hamper is dependent on number of children registered with CIW. Please do get in touch with your Local Authority if you haven't yet had an invitation to apply.

Grow Your Own Feast Fun in Swansea Clubs

Workshop winners Hendrefoilan After School Club in Swansea, had lots of fun in their most recent workshop as part our Tesco Centenary Grow Your Own Feast project. After a very wet and windy week, the workshop finally went ahead utilising the club's fabulous outdoor space – the perfect place to start a herb garden! Due to the time of year, we gave ourselves a head start and bought some ready grown window herbs, perfect for planting up in larger pots. The children enjoyed smelling and tasting the mint and talking about all things minty!

two was held in their setting. The children had lots of fun talking about their experiences of sowing and growing with their families. The children cooked outside and made spooky Halloween faces with their ingredients. They commented on how the textures of vegetables change when they cook with many trying new foods for the first time! A lovely afternoon session was had by all, sharing ideas and planning their 'family feast' for the month ahead, using the resources cards for inspiration.

Best of luck to you all!

In preparation for next spring, the children planted, very carefully as it was rather windy, some lavender and thyme seeds in hope that in a few months' time their garden will be filled with a beautiful smell to see them through the summer months. There are great recipes for campfire pizzas and herb bread in our newly launched Grow Your Own Feast pack.

After all that gardening, the children were ready for a healthy snack and were served a large cup of strawberry, cucumber and mint water with a side of carrot sticks, whilst chatting about how fruit and vegetables are grown and what they could grow in their garden. Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs look forward to seeing how much the herb garden and seeds have grown at their next workshop!

Also joining in the Tesco Grow your Own feast fun, was Sunbeams After School Club in Gorseinon. Following a successful online planning session, the Playworkers and children set to work growing their own fruit, vegetables and herbs over the summer holidays. Session



TESCO Bags of Help

Free Resources to Support Outdoor Play given to Clubs in West Wales

From April 2020, workshop delivery through projects such as those funded by Tesco Bags of Help, Ray Gravell and Friends Charitable Trust had to be put on hold. However, these projects allowed us to create 12 bilingual activity cards focusing on the natural elements of earth, fire, water and air and a den building guide to improve children's physical and mental wellbeing and encourage outdoor play, connecting with nature and mitigating coronavirus risks. These resources went to identified Clubs in Pembrokeshire and Carmarthenshire. All Carmarthenshire member Clubs also received a gofindit sensory outdoor scavenger hunt card game to compliment the resources.



5 Clubs in Carmarthenshire also received a forest school den building kit and Playworkers' toolbelt to compliment the resources above as part of the Ray Gravell and Friends Charitable Trust grant to enhance play experiences for children.

Thank you very much to our funders, ensuring play is put at the forefront to help children recover from the negative impacts of the Pandemic. If you have fun playing outdoors and using these lovely new resources we would love you to tag @clybiau #showyourplay on social media.



Local Community Fund

Playwork Training in West Wales

Since January 2021, over 200 individuals from settings in West Wales have expressed an interest in Playwork qualifications. 65 have been placed on the Award in Transition to Playwork (from Early Years) which is now open to a wider audience. Those with a level 3 in early years, support, teaching and learning in schools, forest school, youth work are now eligible to access this Playwork qualification which can be achieved in 12 weeks. Funded Playwork Apprenticeships at levels 2, 3 and 5 are also available.



KIDS' CLUBS



North Wales

Meet Our North Wales Clubs Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' clubs celebrated our 20th Birthday on 2nd October 2021 and here in North Wales we wanted to take the opportunity to introduce and celebrate with a few of our long-standing member clubs. The North Wales Childcare Business Development Officers have been discussing with clubs what they value about their membership and here are a few of our fabulous clubs...

Deganwy Out of School Club, Conwy

Deganwy Out of School Club was established in 2003 and is run by a voluntary management committee of parents who employ a team of qualified staff and have been members of Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs for around 15 years.

The Club is situated in the grounds of Ysgol Deganwy in a purpose-built premises; the Deganwy Play & Learning Centre. We have use of a large, bright main room for fun and games, craft activities and indoor sports. The room leads directly out to an enclosed garden area which comprises of a paved patio sited under a veranda, multi-purpose pitch, a grassed area and sensory garden.

Deganwy Out of School club provide After School provision open between the hours of 2.45pm-6pm every weekday. After a long day in school the focus of After School Club is free play. A daily craft activity is also available based on the theme of the week. A light snack is served at 4pm.

Along with Afterschool provision the club also provides a Holiday Club running between the hours of 8.30 - 5.30pm in school holidays and on staff training days. Children are welcomed from schools in the locality. A range of theme-based activities including art and baking are available during the holidays, but children are also free to choose what they do, which means there is a very relaxed atmosphere. In the summer holidays the club occasionally take the children on trips and have a range of interesting workshops.

The Club have shared some testimonials from parents, "You are all amazing staff who go above and beyond to make sure the children have the best experiences."

"Thank you for all the hard work you put into running the club for the benefit of our children." Janet Smith, Manager said, "Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs have been a great support over the years and provide resources that aid

Need to contact us?

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

Caban Y Faenol, Gwynedd

Caban Y Faenol are based in a cabin on school grounds at Ysgol Y Faenol. The setting operates from 7.30- 6pm for children aged 2-12 years. The club has been registered with CIW since 2013.

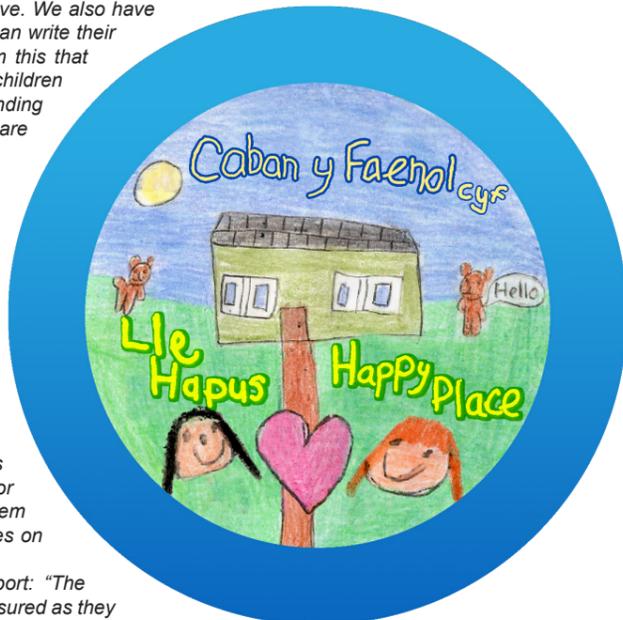
From the club;

"One of our main priorities at the club is the voice of the child as per article 12 and 13 of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child - Respect the views of the child, and Freedom of expression. These are just 2 articles of the convention that we strongly believe in and take into account during the day to day running of the club.

We believe that to run a club where children are happy, feel respected, are proud and able to take ownership of their club then it is of the utmost importance that their voices are heard. The children are involved in all aspects of the club including planning activities and outings, setting rules for the club and deciding the snack menu.

We regularly send out questionnaires to parents and children to ensure that we are providing a quality service and we are meeting everybody's needs. Children have regular meetings to discuss what activities, resources, equipment they would like to have. We also have a 'Wish Wall' where they can write their ideas. We have seen from this that we run a club in which children are happy and enjoy attending and a service that parents are grateful for.

As a member of Clybiau Plant Cymru we know that whenever we need support or advice that there is always someone there to help. Over the years we have gained so much from Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs, such as - training for staff, workshops for the children as well as new equipment for the club. We can't thank them enough and pride ourselves on being members. Caban Y Faenol CIW report: "The well-being of children is ensured as they have a strong voice and they are respected and valued."



Munchkins @ Ysgol Llanbedr, Denbighshire

Munchkins @ Llanbedr, recently achieved Charitable Incorporated Association status is an afterschool club, in Llanbedr, Denbighshire registered to care for 50 children. The club is located on the ground of Ysgol Llanbedr. Munchkins is a very unique club as it is run from community spirit. The club have access to a community garden in which they won award from National lottery, Awards for All grant funders. The club were awarded £5,965.00 The application was completed with the support of their Childcare Business Development Officer and the aim is to develop the outdoor space for the children and the community. A Yurt was purchased to be used as an outdoor classroom and the community garden had the well needed protection of a fence to help keep the fruit and vegetables growing for all to enjoy. Outdoor equipment was also purchased and protective overalls for the gardening.

Munchkins @ Llanbedr, have been members of Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' clubs for over 10 years and have commented on how valuable the membership and support is for the crucial running of the club.

Meithrinfa Busy B's Nursery- Out of School Childcare Gwynedd

Meithrinfa Busy B's Nursery is a privately managed day nursery and offers Out of School Childcare from the setting. The setting provides childcare for children aged 3 months to 11 years and is based in Bangor, Gwynedd. The setting was established in 2009 and have been Clybiau Plant Kid's Club members ever since! The club operates from 7.30 in the morning offering a healthy breakfast to ensure that the children are ready for the day ahead. The Afterschool Club runs from 3.00-6.00pm and they also offer Out of School Childcare throughout the holidays.

The setting provides a separate room for the Out of School Childcare which allows the children to be able to relax after a busy day in school. The club offers a range of games, puzzles, arts and craft and activities as well as having access to the playground.

Jen the Manager has said; *"We have been able to complete play work qualifications with Clybiau Plant Cymru Kid's Clubs, this has enabled staff to gain relevant qualifications and gain valuable play work knowledge.*

We receive regular email updates which have been very useful and have kept us informed of all guidance changes over the last 12-18 months.

It is always nice to have a catch up and chat with Clybiau Plant Cymru Kid's Clubs staff when they call!"



Clwb Enfys Ltd, Conwy

Clwb Enfys Ltd consists of 4 Out of School Childcare provisions within the county of Conwy.

Ty Bryn Day Nursery is situated in the hospital ground in Llanfairfechan, Conwy and caters for children aged 0- 12 years. The chain of childcare provision also provides Out of school childcare for children age 3-12 in Clwb Enfys Llanfairfechan, based on the school grounds of Ysgol Pant Y Rhedyn, Llanfairfechan, Clwb Enfys Penmaenmawr, based on the school grounds of Ysgol Pencae, Penmaenmawr and Clwb Enfys Awel Y Mynydd based on the school grounds of Ysgol Awel Y Mynydd, Llandudno Junction.

The clubs have been members of Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids Clubs for over 15 years and have utilised the support from the Conwy Childcare Business Development Officer to open the clubs along with bespoke support with policies, procedures and CIW issues.

Each provision provides a play rich environment with access to outdoor and indoor activities whilst practicing a child led approach to play.

The club work closely with Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids Clubs and have taken advantage of our Stepping out guide full of policies and resources and staff have enjoyed attending our various training courses.

Julie Everley Area Manager of Clwb Enfys has said *"We are very proud to be a part of a fantastic association, you are all amazing and very helpful too always offering advice that is fast and efficient.*

Nothing is too much trouble for any of you and despite me being a big pain (I know I am one!!!) you are still there to help me. Even during these difficult times, you are still there which mean a lot. I would recommend all small businesses of this nature to join Clybiau as the benefits are massive!"

We look forward to continuing to work with you and thank you for providing the amazing play opportunities for children across the county of Conwy.

Clwb Ffrindie Bach, Ysgol Penbarras, Ruthin, Denbighshire

Clwb Ffrindie Bach is a full day care setting based at Ysgol Pen Barras, Ruthin, Denbighshire, we have been members of Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs, since we opened our after school club in September, 2006. There is a wraparound childcare club registered for 24 children aged 3 and an after school club registered for 80 children aged 4-11, both childcare clubs are very popular.

The main focus of delivering registered, high quality childcare at Ysgol Pen Barras is to ensure we are providing a safe stimulating environment and meeting high standards, for children to relax, work and play whilst attending Clwb Ffrindie Bach. We are registered with the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) as a full day care setting. Our staff provide good quality childcare, there are resources and equipment both inside and outside to keep the children stimulated, playing and enjoying themselves whilst in our care.

Being a member of Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs has been invaluable to Clwb Ffrindie Bach. Not only have we received support with all aspects of delivering high quality affordable out of school childcare, we have also through their support managed to achieve our charitable status during the Covid 19 pandemic.

Supported by Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs to become a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), has enabled us to have the peace of mind that we now have a robust legal governance and our Trustees have protected liability. None of this would have been possible without the excellent support provided by our Childcare Business Development Officer.

The support, guidance that was provided to the Committee through a step by step process was ideal for us, meeting on our computers at times which were suitable for us all. Our Charitable status and CIW registration ensure that Clwb Ffrindie Bach has a more robust management structure, providing much needed support to our local community. Also, being a CIO and CIW registered will mean that we are well placed to be able to access grants in the future, should Clwb Ffrindie Bach be in a position to require additional funding.

As members of Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs the support provided by our Childcare Business Development Officer has been extremely valuable during a difficult time for all of us. The Governance structure, Care Inspectorate Wales registration, staff and management of Clwb Ffrindie Bach enables us to provide robust, sustainable, high quality Out of School Childcare at our school, to support our families and the local community. I would like to thank all those involved in making this happen.



South East Wales

New Clubs in South East Wales

Congratulations to Rebecca Bennett and her team for successfully opening and registering two new clubs in Rhondda Cynon Taf. Rebecca was approached by the Head Teachers of Llwynrcrwn Primary School and Gwaunmeisgyn Primary School who had identified that parents were struggling with After School Childcare for their children. Clwb Y Ddraig have three successful clubs in Caerphilly with experienced manager Rebecca greatly placed to take these new clubs forward. Rebecca met with the heads and began making plans to set up the two clubs. The biggest difficulty was recruitment of new qualified and experienced staff which as we know is an issue many clubs are facing at the moment. Through much perseverance and a lot of marketing they were able to recruit appropriately qualified staff and work began on Care Inspectorate Wales registration. The club successfully achieved registration and opened in September and numbers are good.

Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs wish you the very best.



Need to contact us?

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

Congratulations to Oak Hill ASD on their First Year Anniversary!

For those of you who have been following the development of Oak Hill ASD over the past year it has been an honour to support them and see them develop and achieve this great First Year Anniversary milestone. The club has been developed during the pandemic and within this very challenging time has achieved in so many ways!

- Setting up a Voluntary Managed Committee (VMC) to develop the club. Working remotely and via online platforms.
- Becoming a Charity Incorporated Organisation (CIO) to support their governance and legal structure.
- Running a pilot Holiday Club for the first time within October 2020 Half Term
- Recruiting a Person in Charge and deputy as well as many support workers for 1:1 childcare support.
- Becoming registered with Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)
- Delivering the Holiday Childcare that is needed for the children and their parents.
- Successful funding applications awarded to ensure they are sustainable for the future of the club.

At Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs, we wish them all the continued success and hope that they have a long and sustainable future ahead, providing children with the childcare they need within Newport.



Involving Children in Staff Recruitment

Interviews can be boring affairs – we have all been there, asking stock questions and receiving stock answers. What do we really learn about the applicants that tells us how good they will actually be working with the children? Do you choose someone that gives really good answers but lacks enthusiasm, or someone that's really enthusiastic but struggles with the questions?

One way to make the process more fun and informative is to involve the children in your recruitment process. After all, they are the ones that will be with the successful applicant the most.

This will give children a say in who will be caring for them, supporting their Rights

under Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, whilst also giving them an insight into the world of work and helping them to develop some of their personal skills.

So, how can you get children involved in your recruitment processes? Firstly, remember that this is a legal process you are following, so children will need some guidance about what can and cannot happen during the recruitment process.

- Start by doing some simple activities with them – e.g. What makes a good Playworker? You

could draw a body on a large piece of paper and get the children to write down the qualities they would like the new Playworker to have.

- Once the children have decided all the things they want the new Playworker to be

(there could be lots!), get them to agree a top 5 or top 10.

- From these qualities, let the children decide how they could ask questions of applicants to help identify these traits in someone they have just met.
- This will let you explore the concept

of open and closed questions with children, which will also help them to improve their vocabulary and communication skills.

Once you have your questions ready, it's time to interview the applicants. How will you do this – will you conduct the interviews during club hours? If you do, you could have the applicant spend 15 minutes within the session with the children, giving the children the opportunity to ask their questions (remember to make a note of the responses for future reference). This will often lead to unplanned follow up questions from the children – so

Examples of closed questions:
Are you good at building dens?
Do you like being outdoors?

you will get to see the applicant responding in a more natural way. If you are going to do this, remember you will need to inform the applicant of the process beforehand.

Following the interviews, it is important to get feedback from the children about what they liked (or didn't like) about each applicant. Again, remember to reinforce the importance of equality and fairness, so that the children know things like "I did/didn't like their hair colour/accents" are not opinions that recruitment decisions can be made on.

Examples of open questions:
What games did you like playing as a child?
What would you do if it was raining all day?

Finally, it is important that you feedback on the decision made to the children, which will show them that you have valued their input.

For further support, please speak to your Childcare Business Development Officer.

Childcare & Business Development Officers for Newport

Welcome to Sian James who has now joined the Newport team as Welsh Language Childcare Business Development Officer alongside Clare Dare. Sian will be working to support the development of Welsh Language provision across Newport, funded 1 day per week to:

- Support Welsh Language provision to become registered childcare
- Support clubs to develop their use of Welsh Language
- Encourage bilingual provision

Please contact us if you require any support and keep an eye out for the Welsh Language Webinar that is being delivered for Newport Clubs in the coming months.



Grow Your Own Feast

Grow your own Feast Sustainable Cooking

Butternut squash Soup

What you need:

- 1 Butternut squash chopped up
- 1 onion cut into quarters
- 2 carrots chopped
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 2 cloves garlic
- 1 stock cube of your choice

What you need to do

- 1 Roast all the vegetables in the oven until soft.
- 2 Remove from the oven and add to a pan.
- 3 Add stock to cover vegetables.
- 4 Bring to the boil.
- 5 Blitz the soup when cooled and serve.



Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs
Bridge House, Station Road, Llanishen, Cardiff CF14 5UW
T: 029 2074 1000 F: 029 2074 1047 E: info@clybiauplantcymru.org
Company limited by guarantee 4296436
Registered charity 1093260

Herb Bread

Herbs like a sunny spot and well-drained soil in open ground or containers. Thyme and rosemary are perennials: they will survive the winter and you can harvest them year after year.

What you need:

- 1-3/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 tablespoon minced fresh herbs from your garden
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 3/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup water
- 1/2 cup olive oil
- Sea salt

What you need to do

- 1 Combine the flour, herbs, baking powder and salt. Stir in water and 1/3 cup oil until mixture forms soft dough. Turn onto a floured surface and knead for 1 minute.
- 2 Divide dough into thirds; shape into balls. Roll each ball into a 10-in. circle on parchment paper. Lightly brush each with remaining oil; sprinkle with salt. Slide parchment paper onto a baking sheet.
- 3 Bake at 450° for 8-10 minutes or until golden brown. Remove from pan to a wire rack to cool. Repeat with remaining dough. Break into pieces for serving.

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Free, fun ideas for children to enjoy the outdoors and keep well, growing and cooking their own feast – visit www.clybiauplant-cymru.org/projects.asp

Christmas is the ultimate celebration, where we prepare and feast together with loved ones. We are pleased to launch our completed Grow Your Own Feast Pack, now live on the members area of our website. There are sections to help you get started, sow and plant your own food, cook together, forage and celebrate. You'll find

lots of ideas to help children and adults enjoy outdoors and keep well, growing and cooking their own feast.

Thank you to our 9 competition winning Clubs which received gardening resources and have been piloting our resources and taking part in our workshops. We've really enjoyed them and hope you have too.

For this time of year there are some great ideas in the pack for some simple warming win-

ter soups. After Christmas, you'll need to start thinking about preparing your growing spaces and sowing those first seeds in the early spring. There are still some winter varieties you can nurture this time of year: try onions, garlic or beetroots. A sunny windowsill herb box will bring some flavoursome tastes and scents through the winter too.

Visit the members area on www.clybiauplant-cymru.org to access this lovely, bilingual pack!

Grow your own Feast Sustainable Cooking

Broccoli Soup

What you need:

- 1 onion, sliced
- 1 head of broccoli florets
- 25g butter
- 3 level tbsp red lentils
- 850ml chicken stock

What you need to do

- 1 In a suitable large bowl, microwave the onions and broccoli for five minutes on high.
- 2 Stir in the other ingredients.
- 3 Cover and cook on high for 10 minutes.
- 4 Blend and reheat when ready to serve.

Leek, Potato and Carrot Soup

What you need:

- 3 Medium sized Potatoes peeled and chopped
- 3 Medium Carrots peeled and chopped
- 3 Medium leeks peeled and chopped
- 1 stock cube of your choice

What you need to do

- 1 Place all the chopped vegetables in a pan and cover with the stock.
- 2 Bring to the boil and then simmer for 20 minutes until the vegetables are soft.
- 3 Blitz the soup to make a thick soup, or blitz half for a slightly thinner soup.



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Do you wish to increase your use of Welsh but do not know where to start?

The online Camau course coupled with support from our Welsh Language Support Officers is a good place to start.

Camau is an Online Self Study course at Entry level tailored for childcare practitioners. The course consists of the following and is fully funded:

- Approximately 20 hours of independent learning;
- Learn Welsh to use with children in settings;
- Pronouncing the alphabet, colours, days of the week and numbering;
- Learn commands and introduce prepositions.

Our Welsh Language Support Officers will be there to support you on your journey and beyond with bespoke, practical online support sessions tailored to you.

For further information please contact Sian James or Janine Elworthy on:
sianej@clybiauplantcymru.org
07971967288
janinee@clybiauplantcymru.org
07970 728610

This Autumn we hosted our first Meet the Welsh language coordinator events. Below is our Welsh language support team with just a few of our happy Welsh language learners!

If members of your team are interested in a FREE online Welsh language course and would like to participate with us in this journey then we are still currently accepting applications. Please don't hesitate to get in touch @ <https://www.clybiauplantcymru.org/contact-us.asp> for further information.



Camau

Cynllun Dysgu Cymraeg Addysg a Gofal Plant Blynyddoedd Cynnar / Learn Welsh Scheme for Early Years Education and Childcare

'Fun'draising Ideas

Funding available Fundraising ideas [easyfundraising.co.uk](https://www.easyfundraising.co.uk)

Your Childcare Setting may still be in need of funding as it recovers post pandemic. Local Authorities have a range of funding available this financial year that can support your setting such as:

- **30 Hour Small Capital Grants** – you could improve your outdoor play provision or purchase IT equipment for instance.
- **Sustainability grants** to see you through the impacts of Covid-19 since last April.
- **Summer of Fun funding** which can be used to fund places within Holiday Clubs in the likely event it will be continued in 2022.

Although it can be difficult to apply for grants on top of the general administration involved in delivering out of school care, the funding could support and prepare your setting for challenging times such as a continued dip in demand as parents juggle childcare and working from home.

1. **Winter foraging:** give the children a list of items to find outside like holly, fern, fir cones, leaves and sticks. The children can then use their foraged items to make beautiful Christmas decorations which can be sold. Look on our activities page for more details.
2. Organise a **children's disco** with an entrance fee and charge for refreshments.
3. Make space for all those new **Christmas presents** by asking donations of any unwanted gift items or good quality pre-loved items that can be re **sold or raffled**.
4. **Festive hampers / Dwynwen's Day hampers** can be created by asking all the children to bring in one item each (biscuits, chocolates, crackers etc.). Sell raffle tickets to parents/carers and others in the community to win the hamper.

Our "How to Guide" for involving children in fundraising can be found on the members area of our website

Raising donations for your cause using easyfundraising is easy and completely free. Christmas tends to be the busiest time of the year for shopping and your supporters can raise FREE donations for your good cause every time they shop online. They can raise when they get gifts, decorations, festive food, or anything else they'll be buying anyway at this time of year. We've created all the tools you need to remind people to use easyfundraising when they shop online in the Raise More section of our website

If you haven't registered your good cause with us yet, it's easy and completely FREE. Get started at: <https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/register-your-good-cause>

Funding support

We are able to support you with funding applications. We also have a package of resources on our website to help you calculate how much funding you need and to write a strong application. We can help you with a **cashflow forecast**, to demonstrate to funders that you have comprehensive financial planning in place, and/or short term need for financial support. We have also written some **top tips** to consider when writing funding applications, and a more comprehensive step by step guide to writing funding applications available for members on the Member's Resources area of the website. Login to access [here](#).

We also have one of our online 'Clwb Hwb' discussion sessions focussed on accessing funding.



Support us while we support you!

Online shopping through 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 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 to ensure you receive your electronic copy.



Training

Reflecting as a team

As Playworkers reflection is a vital tool throughout our practice. Being able to undertake reflection on our own practice, our organisational framework, the play environment, events and also on our colleagues is essential in order to maintain a quality play environment that effectively meets the needs and rights of children and young people attending our Settings. As Playworkers we need to be able to make informed judgements and decisions based on what we have seen and heard. Ensuring we are not only reflecting on this but also exploring our own feelings, values and beliefs and the impact that these have on our day to day actions and interactions with both children and colleagues.

Reflective practice isn't always going to be easy, there will be times when it will be uncomfortable to look at ourselves reflectively, it will cause us to question our values and what we think we know, make us analyse our actions and responses, but ultimately reflective practice is how we will learn, develop, grow and better ourselves, our practice and better support our colleagues to provide an enriched play environment for children and young people.

Reflection within our teams is vitally important, this is where you will be able to examine and consider how we relate to colleagues and how colleagues relate to us and to the children and young people. We need to be considering how does our behaviours and the behaviours of other Playworkers impact on the children and their play. Are you and your colleagues supportive, kind, understanding and flexible? Do you all want what is best for the children and young people? It is during observations and reflections that we can identify any issues and make way to eradicate them.

There are many ways in which we can reflect as a team to ensure that we are providing the best possible play experiences for children. These could include staff meetings, supervisions, appraisals, discussions, children's consultations and sharing best practice.

To be able to reflect on yourself and colleagues we need to draw from what we feel, know, experience and have learnt. Bob Hughes, in *Play Environment: A Question of Quality*, developed the IMEE reflection tool as a means of encouraging Playworkers to reflect on themselves and colleagues. IMEE is a simple reflection tool which helps Playworkers to analyse the quality of their play environment against four areas, intuition, memory, experience and evidence. Hughes believed that as Playworkers, we use our intuition, personal childhood memories, experiences of working and being with children in play environments, as well as what we have gained from whatever research and other data or evidence we have

read to inform and impact our practice and the quality of the play environment offered.

The IMEE is a simple reflective tool for Playworkers to use.

Intuition – what good play should be like
Memories – of what good play is, against their own memories
Experience – of what 'good' play is based on professional practice
Evidence – of what good play is based on scientific literature.

Another reflection tool that can be used by Playworkers is the SLLRRRP approach (stop, look, listen, reflect, react, reflect, practice). This is a dynamic reflection approach which will support us to reflect in the moment when observing play and play behaviours and supports Playworkers to learn to give children the opportunity to deal with behaviour themselves and work through their play with little or no intervention.

Stop – Resist the temptation to jump right in. We give ourselves time to consider the best response.

Look – What's going on? We gather information.
Listen – What's happening? We gather information using all our senses.

Reflect – We consider whether we should intervene and if so, how? What would be the effect of our intervention, or non-intervention? What does theory tell us? What do our instincts say?

React – Having considered our response, we react to the situation which may mean doing nothing.

Reflect – What impact have we had on the play process? Has our intervention helped or hindered the play process?

Practice – We continue to reflect and develop our practice. Consistently adopting a successful intervention style requires continual practice and development.

Remember reflective practice is a vital tool for us all to us to better our own practice, our colleagues practice and provide quality first hand experiences for the children that attend out play Settings.



Why make time for Supervision

As Playworkers we are often so busy making sure that the children in our Setting are happy and settled with enhancing play spaces, buying resources and cleaning up to name but a few Supervision very often ends up at the bottom of the list of things to get done. However, we need to remember the importance of making time to have supervision. Below is some key reason why we need supervision and some easy ways to try and fit it into working life.

Supervision is important because

- It gives you time to reflect on your workload, anything that's worrying you and your teamwork
- It allows you and your manager to look into your performance and give you praise or it is an appropriate place to give you constructive criticism
- It is a confidential space for you to discuss anything you feel you need to
- A place to share ideas and ways forward
- It chance to discuss training you may want to attend

Easy ways to complete supervision if you are struggling for time

- If you are doing it over the phone do a walking meeting/supervision
- If it is not possible to do it at your Setting, meet for a coffee or lunch
- Set time aside for supervision and book the next one in before you leave the last one, if its booked in you are more likely to stick to the session
- Do it over the phone if you can't meet up in person



Playvolution: How the Playwork role has evolved?

Let's start back at a beginning, not the beginning, just a beginning. One of the beginnings of Playwork and one of the ways that has led to Playwork developing into the profession we know and love today.

Let me start by introducing you to Lady Allen of Hurtwood. After World War II, in 1946 when the UK and the rest of Europe were trying to rebuild and move forward, Lady Allen of Hurtwood had the chance to visit Emdrup Playground in Copenhagen, a junk playground that had been commissioned by the Copenhagen authorities and designed by an architect, C. Sorenson in order to provide children with a place to play. Sorenson designed the playground to be able to be manipulated and controlled completely by the children and used the bomb sites that the children had taken to playing on as his inspiration.

Lady Allen was so inspired by what she had seen and the endless possibilities available that she brought the concept back to London and in the 1960s 'adventure playgrounds' were born.

"It may be helpful to think of an adventure playground as a Gesamtkunstwerk, or "total artwork," a space and time where all one's senses are engaged." Wilson, P.

Built on a bomb site in London, the first adventure playground, staffed by what was then known as 'wardens' were places where children could explore, build, create and play freely in a compensatory play space. As the 'wardens' watched and observed the children play, their role began to develop, they began to advocate for play, to support and to facilitate children's play and thus the term Playworker and Playwork was born.

"An adventure playground should be in a constant process of change, directed, informed, and executed by the children and their playing and supported by the Playworkers. It is a space that allows for all the different types of play to be discovered by children. It is a place of psychological safety and calculated risk." Wilson, P.

Since then, we have seen a boom in studies and research specifically undertaken about Playwork, the role of Playworkers and play from a Playwork perspective.

What is Playwork?

Try not to get confused here as what a Playworker does, but focus on Playwork as a profession. Playwork is a profession that exists to support children's needs and rights to play.

From 'wardens' on adventure playgrounds fast forward 60 years and Playworkers can be found in a number of Settings, Out of School Clubs, open access playgrounds, adventure playgrounds, hospitals as play specialists and play therapists.

Let's not forget that Playwork as a profession also has its own set of standards and ethical framework that underpins our thinking's, practice and our roles and links clearly with our established Playwork theories. Our Playwork Principles have been developed and established by the sector and held in trust by the Playwork Principles Scrutiny Group 2005.

Global Playwork?

With play being a universal language and the Playwork Principles being widely accepted globally by the wider Playwork sector and those practising outside the UK, hopefully time will bring a greater voice and power for play and Playwork and with it an opportunity to advocate across the globe for freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated play for every child.

Delivering effective team meetings

1. Preparation is 'key' – putting in a little effort prior to the meeting will be 'good time spent'. Start with why are you having the meeting in the first place? If you don't know why you're having the meeting it's going to be hard to make it successful. Just because you always have team meetings on a Monday morning, isn't the right answer. Prior to the meeting you need to think about the topics for discussion and draft an agenda.

2. Arranging your meeting and setting an agenda

Make sure that the time and date set for your team meetings are suitable for all staff to attend. Plan these in advance so that your staff know when and where the meeting will take place.

3. Setting an agenda

- Define the meeting.
- Ask other members of the team for input.
- Think about any questions you want to address.
- Plan tasks. Do you want anyone to take notes/minutes/actions? If so, let them know prior to the meeting.
- Estimate the amount of time on each topic, it is useful to put timings on an agenda then you should try to keep to these.

- Identify who will lead on each topic. Remember it's a team meeting, therefore it's not up to you to do all the talking.
- Remember to include positive feedback/good news stories to boost morale.
- End each meeting with a review of the meeting, and inform attendees the date of the next meeting.

A template of an agenda can be downloaded from Stepping Out.

4. Keep everyone in the loop

It's important to inform everyone of the meeting at least a week prior to the meeting and send the agenda out to everyone at least 48 hours before the meeting. If members of the team are required to lead on an agenda item, it's reasonable to give them plenty of notice prior to the meeting.

5. Include your team in the meeting

It's very important to get input from members of your team and involve the staff to be part of the discussions, ensuring it's not always up to one person to 'run the show' and others just to listen. Talk about topics that impact on all of the staff not just on a few, as others will 'switch off' or get frustrated thinking their time could be better spent doing something else.



Think about whether you need to meet with a few staff to discuss a particular item, if so arrange a separate meeting/discussion for those staff only.

6. Don't forget...

Try to keep to the time you've set and make your meetings useful and fun.

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) ask at inspections if you have team meetings, keep copies of notes or minutes taken to refer back to.

Tax implications for staff taking second roles

Some managers/staff believe that by taking on a second role they will need to pay more tax than if they were to only have one, but this is not usually the case.

If you are working, you're entitled to earn a certain amount of money without paying Income Tax. This is called the Personal Allowance and is £12,570 for the 2021/22 tax year. You will only pay 20% tax on anything earned above that figure up to the threshold of £50,000.

You only get one Personal Allowance, so it is usually best to have it applied to the job paying you the most. If you work two jobs and neither income is above £12,570, you can split your Personal Allowance. You would need to ring HMRC as they can split the tax code between the two jobs.

If you have two jobs and earn over £184 per week in both, then you will pay NI in the two jobs.

Example 4

Nia is a Headteacher. This role earns her £45,000 per annum, but she also has a part time role within the After School Club her own children attend for £12,000 per year. This gives Nia a total income of £57,000, meaning that she is required to pay 20% tax on anything she earns over £12,570, and 40% tax on anything she earns over £50,000. Unless Nia informs the HMRC of this then her second job will be taxed at the basic rate when some (£7,000 in this case) should be taxed at the higher rate. If Nia doesn't inform the HMRC then she will be required to pay this back at the end of the year.

**There may be a requirement to pay NI in both roles if the businesses are deemed to be 'businesses in association' – Always contact the HMRC directly for the most up to date advice. Further information on your business's obligations if your employee has more than one role can be found - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/what-to-do-if-your-employee-has-more-than-1-job>

Example 1

Jan works part time as a dinner lady within the school and part time at the After School Club. She earns £14,000 as a dinner lady, and £6000 in the club. Her personal allowance is utilised within her first role as a dinner lady. Therefore she would pay 20% tax on the £1430 that is over her personal allowance in her first role and 20% of all income in her second role within the club. Jan must let HMRC know she has two roles otherwise she may accidentally receive a personal allowance in both roles and will end up owing the HMRC money for unpaid tax.

Example 2

Dafydd is a part time teaching assistant at the school and earns £7,000 in that role. Dafydd offers to take a second role within the childcare setting working next door and earns £5,880 in his second job as a Playworker. Dafydd's tax code for the first job would be C700L and for the second job it would be C588L meaning Dafydd's Personal Allowance has been split between his two jobs and therefore wouldn't pay any tax across either role (Dafydd would need to call HMRC to let them know that he would like his personal allowance split across both roles).

Example 3

Jessica is also a part time teaching assistant working within a school. Jessica offers to take a part time role within the After School Club operating on the school premises. This setting is a school run setting and therefore Jessica would need to contact the payroll department within the Local Authority to clarify whether these hours will be completed under the same contract, or a separate contract. If this is a second contract then Jessica would need to contact the HMRC as above. If Jessica is working under the same contract and only doing additional hours, then she will not need to contact the HMRC. Jessica would be required to pay the same amount of tax regardless of whether this work is complete under one, or two contracts.

Creating an inclusive workplace

"It takes a village to raise a child". This African proverb could also be used in relation to a Childcare Setting: every member of staff at your Club has a part to play in the quality of your provision and in the experience offered to the children in your care. Ensuring that your staff are working together effectively, that they are motivated and that they feel valued is therefore essential to the quality of your provision, to staff retention, and to the benefit of families accessing your services.

An inclusive workplace is one in which all staff feel welcomed, respected and valued.

- All staff are encouraged to develop and progress. Development Plans form an essential discussion point within supervisions and staff at all experience levels should have the opportunity to access training and CPD opportunities
- You have policies in place that are understood by all management and all staff, and are embedded within your practice relating to equality, fair recruitment and working conditions
- Any potential tensions in the workplace, or bullying behaviours, are anticipated, identified and addressed immediately. You

are likely to have an Anti-bullying policy in place, but may consider this more in terms of the children you support than your staff. Any reports of bullying should be taken seriously and treated with respect, even if your experience of the member of staff accused of bullying behaviour is different. It can be difficult to recognise workplace bullying. Signs may include persistent mistreatment (belittling/humiliation/inappropriate jokes), abuse of hierarchies to disadvantage certain individuals, or exclusion behaviours. Ensure you have a clear procedure in place for how bullying behaviour is dealt with and do not turn a blind eye.

- You ensure that team building / outside of work activities are inclusive and consider the varying preferences, abilities and beliefs of all staff. Activities outside of the working day can be a great way of developing positive working relationships, supporting wellbeing and boosting morale. Whilst it can be difficult to find one activity that will suit all staff, you can try to ensure that if one activity does not meet the preferences of a particular member of staff/group, the next activity that is organised does.

- Inclusive strategies are fully supported and promoted by senior staff, who lead by example
- You have a diverse team. Teams that are diverse in their makeup and reflect the community that the Club serves are able to come up with a wider range of solutions to problems, innovative ideas to develop the provision and ultimately are better able to meet the needs of local families and children.
- You undertake an inclusion review. This might involve reviewing the demographics of your staff (e.g. age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnic group, religion, disability) against job role, retention rates and salary. It could also involve staff consultation, e.g. using a questionnaire to gain an insight into perceptions around:
 - fair treatment,
 - trust,
 - belonging,
 - diversity
 - psychological safety.

Armed with this data, Managers can then reflect on trends or causes for concern and utilise this to enact process changes (e.g. relating to recruitment, progression, staff management)

Boosting Staff Morale

Good morale in the workplace is so important and can make a huge difference to the success of any business. Morale in the workplace can be linked to productivity, performance and staff satisfaction and without these, business can suffer. Benefits of having a team with a high or positive morale outlook will result in happy staff, therefore happy customers, a desire to do well and work hard, and motivation to see their employer thrive and be successful. After a difficult period following the pandemic, employers, now more than ever, need to look at their staff morale and what changes can be made to keep business going forward. Here are some ideas to consider to boost staff morale in your workplace:

- Listen to staff – staff need to feel heard to feel valued and part of a team. This can be

- done through staff surveys, supervisions or team meetings and can be used to discuss workplace issues, wellbeing or part of your planning process. Ensure to act on any feedback.
- Thank you – the power of two words. Tell your staff and colleagues you value them and recognise their hard work.
- Staff incentives – look at ideas to reward staff for their hard work. Consider employee benefit schemes or a day off on their birthday.
- Be honest with your team – if you recognise morale is low, talk it through and look to find solutions before things get any worse.
- Communication – ensure everyone is aware of any changes to business that

- may affect them. Keep staff in the loop and share information equally to avoid gossip and speculation.
- Recognise staff strengths and seek to offer opportunities to attend a training course to enhance their skill. Not only will they feel recognised but will feel a sense of growth and motivation.
- Review and reflect on processes that may be causing stress for staff – can they be changed to make things easier?
- Team building opportunities – spend time as a team away from the workplace if possible.
- Have a zero tolerance for bullying policy in place. Workplace bullying can have a huge impact on staff morale.

Projects

Connecting and Supporting Out of School Childcare Clubs and Communities, funded by The National Lottery Community Fund

Regional and Local Authority funded Childcare Business Development Officers across Wales are here to support you in all aspects of your Out of School Childcare Club business.

The workforce is the theme of this Winter's newsletter and our professional Childcare Business Development Officers across Wales are here to help you.

Out of School Childcare Assessment (OSCA) and Staff

Our OSCA is a succinct self-health check tool for your childcare business, helping you recognise your successes and areas for improvement. The section on 'Management & Staff Development' in particular addresses the records you need to retain for your staff, such as contracts, job descriptions, written references, DBS references, photo ID, evidence of qualifications and a training/development plan; and also helps you consider whether you have the required level of qualified staff.

The section on 'Training and Quality' includes team meetings, CPD, induction, understanding of play types and spaces, and intervention styles.

Governance: Becoming a Charitable Incorporated Organisation

We estimate that there are 918 volunteer committee members helping to provide care for 16,443 children in 306 Out of School Clubs across Wales. We would like to thank all of our Trustees and Voluntary Management

Committee members for their great contribution to keeping children playing and Wales prospering.

Being part of an Out of School Childcare Club management committee can be enjoyable and rewarding, and offers opportunities to develop new skills. If your committee employs staff, leases property and enters into other contracts, you should limit personal liability and adequately protect members by becoming incorporated. An incorporated organisation has a legal personality of its own, and can enter into legal relationships on its own account.

Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs can help committees which are unincorporated associations limit their personal liability by helping them convert to a structure that offers more protection, and recommends the Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) model.

This model has the added benefit of access to more grants and funding. We have already supported 16 voluntary managed committees to become CIOs across Wales and are actively supporting a further 13.

We can provide step by step support to help Clubs move to this more protective structure. Contact us for more information.

Connect We hold regular online network events and you can join at any time.

- Clwb Hwbs are held the 2nd Thursday

of every month via Zoom 18:30 – 19:30 where Settings have the opportunity to discuss relevant topics.

- Online webinars are more structured. Expect themes such as children's participation and staff recruitment/retention in the new year.
- We also have a series of pre-recorded webinars you may access by emailing webinar@clybiauplantcymru.org.

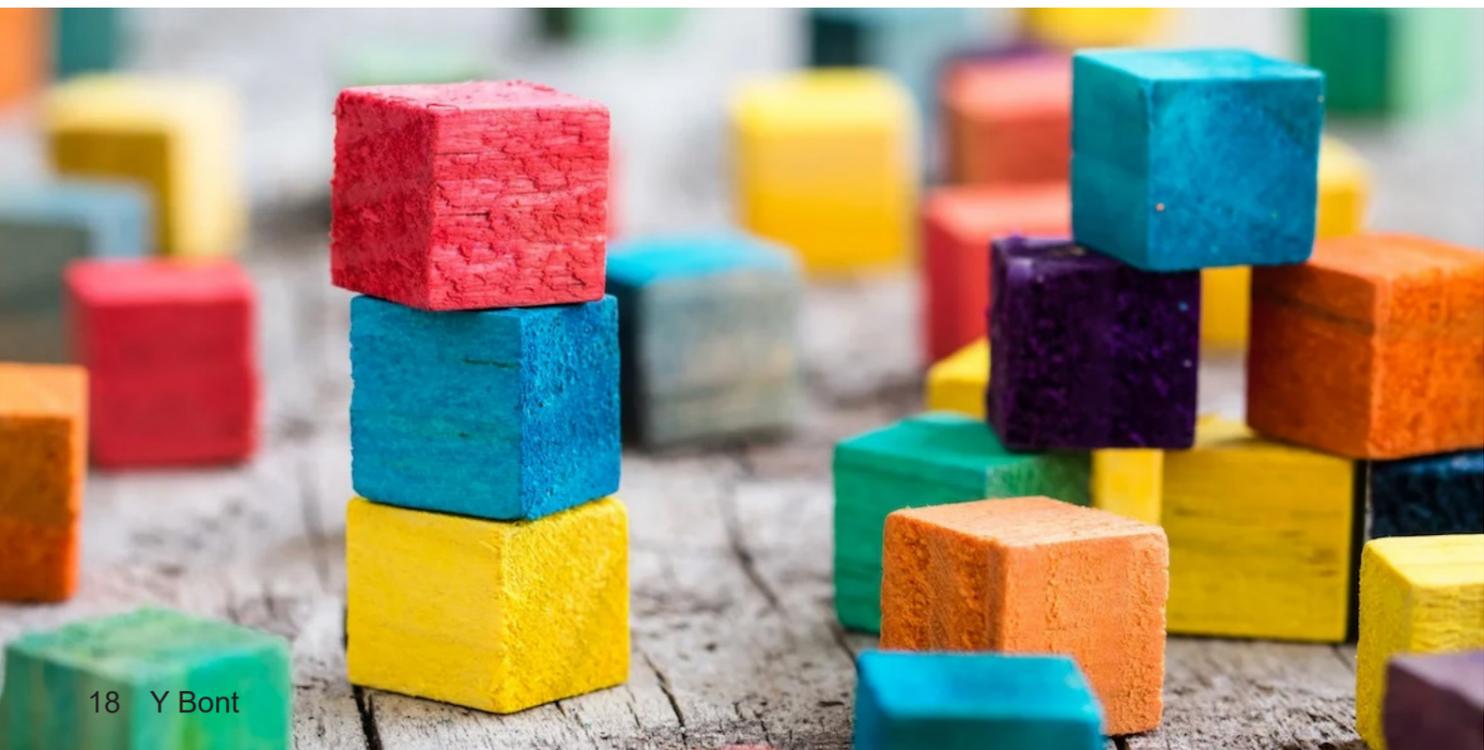
Please visit the training page of our website to book. We look forward to seeing you there.

Please contact your Childcare Business Development Officer or Regional Team if you would like to find out more about the support available.

Cardiff Office:
info@clybiauplantcymru.org

Colwyn Bay Office:
info-nw@clybiauplantcymru.org

Cross Hands Office:
info-ww@clybiauplantcymru.org



Participation - What is it all about?

In simple terms Participation is the process of involvement of children and young people in decision making. "Participation is one of the guiding principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child" (Nations, Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989). Article 12 describes how children and young people have the right to express their opinion and to have their opinions considered when decisions are being made that affect them. As Playworkers we must ensure children have a voice and are actively involved in decision making processes in our Settings.

What are the benefits of Participation?

Involving children and young people in decision making can help develop strong communication skills. They gain a sense of achievement and an increased belief in their own abilities, to have a voice and to make a difference in their own communities.

Article 12 is seen as particularly important, in that it is an enabling right, empowering and supporting children and young people to access broader rights under the UNCRC, within the family and the larger community.

The principle affirms that children are active citizens and have an important contribution to make to their families and their communities.

What are the benefits of Participation for Playwork Settings?

Listening to and collaborating with children and young people helps develop positive relationships between children and adults. Involving children in our work provides a means of empowering children and young people to safeguard themselves from harm and preventing them from being invisible when discussing plans, policies and designing services or making decisions that affect their lives.

Participation allows Settings to directly meet the needs of its service users more effectively.

Here are 3 Participation techniques to get you started

Ideas Avalanche – A quick and easy way to gather ideas from a group, particularly useful when recruiting new staff

What do you need?

- Flip chart and marker pens

What do you do?

1. Set a topic for discussion e.g., "what makes a good Playworker"
2. All participants shout out their ideas and write them up on a flip chart, it is important to include all ideas (even if they seem unrealistic or unachievable) everyone must have a voice
3. At the end of the session chat through the ideas with the group and make some joint decisions based on the topic set
4. A pros and cons list might help with some of the trickier solutions.

Create an Arty mural or wall display (30mins +) – A fun and alternative way for children and young people to express their views and opinions

What do you need?

- Art and craft materials – paints, glue
- Paper
- Large sheets/ Cardboard/ Material
- Brushes
- Flip chart and marker pens

What do you do?

1. Set the topic or theme for the mural e.g., 'what we want from our club'
2. The children can use all the arts and crafts materials to create a visual representation of their thoughts and ideas.
3. The mural can be a large collaboration or lots of smaller pictures joined together
4. Chat with the children as they create. What are they creating? Why do they feel this would be a good idea? You might

find this technique useful for the quieter children or children with additional needs who may feel pressured in a larger group.

Dot Voting – A visual voting technique to answer a question or make a decision

What do you need

- A list of ideas or question to answer
- Dot stickers or pens to create dots

What do you do?

1. Pick a subject, topic or question to answer e.g. "what snacks would you like at club"
2. Create (with the children) and display the list of ideas in a location which is accessible by all.
3. Children can vote for their preference using a single dot.
4. The voting can stay open as long as required
5. When the vote is closed you will have a visual representation of the children's preferences

Top tips for effective participation

- Be aware of the ages and needs of the group.
- Start small and keep things simple until you are confident.
- Pay attention to the energy levels within the group and respond with techniques to 'liven' them up or 'calm' them down accordingly
- Create an open, safe environment where discussion is encouraged and opinions valued.
- Make sure all members of the group have a voice – the techniques can be adapted as required.
- Above all remember participation should not be tokenistic. Children and Young people have the **RIGHT** to have a say in matters which affect them and have their opinions taken into consideration. Give them a voice.

Information and resources available from YOUNG WALES

Young Wales is a Children in Wales initiative, funded by Welsh Government. We are about listening to young people & empowering their voices. Our work is built on the ideas of sharing, informing and changing.

We aim to do this by ensuring that young people have opportunities to raise issues that are important to them and to ensure their voices are heard by decision makers, policy officers, Welsh Government officials and Ministers.

This work is underpinned by the UNCRC and the Children and Young People's National Participation Standards.

Having a Voice – having a choice'
<https://www.childreninwales.org.uk/children-young-people/young-wales/>



Why Staff Retention?

You have taken the time to recruit and employ staff members who have the same ethos as your Setting and are highly qualified, passionate and dedicated individuals with a commitment to your Setting. Retaining those staff and your team is more preferable than recruiting new team members which can be time consuming and expensive.

The best team to have are those that are offered another position and yet decide to stay where they are. Building this kind of team does not come easy and it takes commitment from the employer as much as the employee.

The first step is to recognise that there are 3 types of commitment an employee has towards you. Look at your staff and identify which type they may be;

- **Type 1: Actively Engaged** - These are the ones who are full of passion, they provide new ideas and often go above and beyond what is required of them.
- **Type 2: Not Engaged** - These staff members do put in their time but not as much passion as type 1's, they can often just see it as a job.
- **Type 3: Actively Disengaged** - While we hope you do not have staff members who fall into this category, they are easy to recognise, they tend to be unhappy with negative attitudes.

Far too often, staff begin as actively engaged but over time begin to disengage, so the next step is understanding the role that you play in their engaged type. Ask yourself, do you actively involve them in the planning process, recognising and valuing their input into your business?

By talking to your staff, listening to their thoughts and ideas, you not only show your commitment and engagement to them but you also empower them to want to actively engage and commit to helping their Out of School Childcare Club revive and thrive.

10 ways to actively engage staff in supervision meetings

The National Minimum Standards specify that all paid staff receive regular one-to-one supervision which encourages them to think about the quality of their practice and raise any safeguarding concerns.

Try our 10 tips on supervision meetings to foster authentic, positive relationships.

1 Collaborate on a meeting agenda prior to the supervision meeting

Encourage staff to add discussion points to meeting agendas so that they can be jointly agreed and you know what they want to talk about in advance.

2 Avoid distractions and ensure privacy

Be an active listener. Set your phone and laptop to do not disturb, and focus all your attention on the member of staff. Don't get distracted by your own agenda and ideas. Listen carefully to your staff member and ensure there is a private space you can meet and talk freely.

3 Vary the location if you can

Meeting in the same place every time can feel repetitive. Take your meetings outside sometimes and go for a walk. Leaving your place of work can boost creativity and can also make it easier to have difficult conversations. When walking, emotions are less on display and you tend to be looking in the same direction rather than at one another.

4 Allocate sufficient time

Giving uninterrupted attention can support positive relationships with staff. Don't turn up late, be in a rush or run out of time in meetings. Be committed to supervisions and don't plan them immediately before or after other meetings.

5 Ask about overall well-being

Make connections with your staff and be accessible. Staff will appreciate your empathy and compassion and allow you to build more genuine relationships at work. Try questions such as:

- How are you feeling?
- What makes you satisfied or dissatisfied?
- What have you learned recently and more do you want to learn?

More personal questions may sometimes lead to more difficult conversations, although this can also create a more open and positive culture.

Remember what staff told you during past meetings.

6 Let staff do most of the talking

Ideally the person you are supervising is leading the discussion. You can encourage this by using a shared agenda and encouraging employees to prepare specific talking points.

- Add question prompts to get them thinking about those deeper topics before the meeting.
- Move their talking points to the top of the agenda (so they start the conversation).

7 Listen and clarify

Listen and clarify so you can understand how staff are feeling and their aspirations. Exchanging project updates and sharing information such as statistics should not take up the whole of the meeting when they can be emailed. Instead discuss:

- Priorities
- Team dynamics
- General engagement
- Challenges and barriers
- Career aspirations and goals
- Feedback and requests for change

Supervisions should be about what's helpful for the member of staff.

8 Follow up on action items

Your meeting may often generate action items or next steps and ensure you must ensure that you follow through on them. Writing them down allows you to keep track of these promises and follow-up in future meetings. This allows you to concentrate on building positive relationships and trust with staff.

9 Seek feedback

Ask staff for feedback about your supervisions/ meetings. Do they feel like they are a good use of their time? Is there a different format that they'd like to try? Asking staff is an important part of improving the culture and improving practice.

10 Plan regular meetings

Frequent communication between staff through regular supervision meetings foster great working relationships, enhance team productivity, and help you stay in the loop about issues.

For further information, Step 11 in Stepping Out in the members area of our website includes templates for a supervision contract and record and a staff development plan. Social Care Wales is also updating Supervising and Appraising Well guidance.

Take a Break

We all know the importance of taking regular breaks and lunch breaks at work, or even just pausing and taking 2 minutes to breathe, recoup and focus. Studies have shown that taking regular breaks boosts productivity and focus, improves coping abilities, decision making and emotional intelligence - all things those working with children can benefit from. Here are some top tips your Setting can consider to encourage and support staff whilst they take a break:

- Go for a walk – take a walk around the grounds, around the block or to the local shop and back. Try timing different routes to see which routes can fit into a break. Encourage colleagues to see the benefits of walking, getting fresh air and time to think. Share podcast ideas or music to listen to whilst walking or start a walking group. Try walking as a team for team meetings instead of sitting round a desk.
- Have a selection of books or magazines available to be able to sit and read whilst

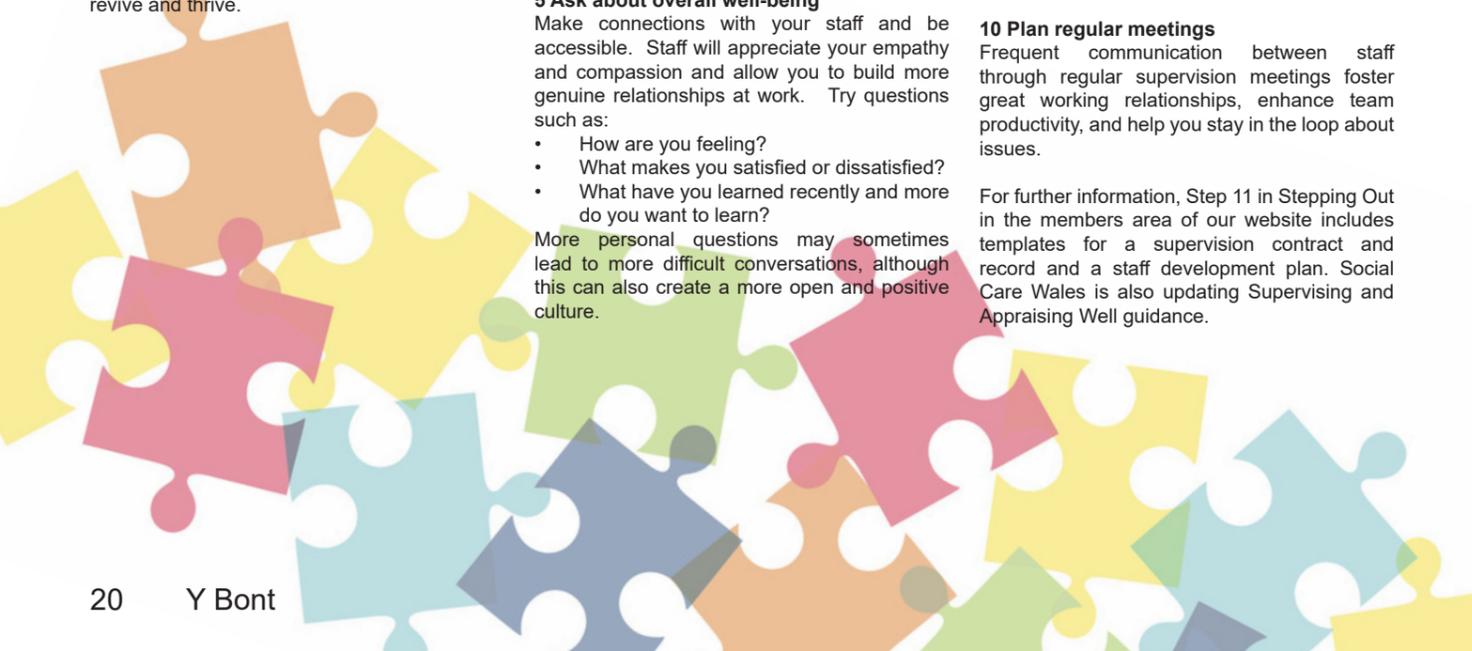
on a break. Try and include a wide variety of books that may promote self-help or hobbies. Ask parents and staff to bring in any books they no longer want at home.

- Practice mindfulness – there are many mindfulness activities that can be done in less than a few minutes, even some that can be done in 60 seconds. There are lots of websites and training opportunities for staff to learn about the benefits of practising mindfulness. Implement when on breaks, on the commute to work, when collecting children or even at the end of the working day.
- Go outside – if your Setting has a garden or a bench or even a local park, try and spend some time outside on breaks – perhaps keep a blanket handy to sit on or use to keep warm in the colder months.
- Get organised - use the time to create meal plans or shopping lists - a way to feel organised and in control of work life

balance. Keep recipe books handy to share ideas.

- Time for a workout? – If you have a long enough break to fit in a workout - do it! The perfect way to feel good and energised coming back to the work space!
- Pamper time – keep face masks, hand creams or even a foot spa handy for when you and your colleagues need a little pampering.
- Don't forget to eat and refuel on a break - working with children uses up a lot of energy! Keep a fruit bowl handy and replenish every week, treat colleagues to a fancy coffee or take it in turns to bring in a treat for everyone to share. Nothing brings people closer together than food!

If you or your colleagues work too short a shift to qualify for a break, ensure you spend your commute or arrival to work effectively, or even sit for 5 minutes at the end of a shift to rest before leaving to go home or onto another job.



Managing Difficult Conversations

As Managers, there may be times when you face difficult conversations with members of your team. It could be in relation to individual/team performance management (e.g. not meeting requirements set out in the job description, actions brought up within a Care Inspectorate Wales [CIW] inspection), issues around code of conduct (e.g. dress code, bullying behaviour, use of inappropriate language, mobile phone usage, timekeeping), handling a grievance/disciplinary process or discussing potential redundancies with individuals/the wider team.

These difficult conversations can be anxiety inducing not just for the member of staff but also for the Manager, and this anticipation can lead to a tendency to put off the discussions for as long as possible. However, issues/situations can escalate when not dealt with promptly and so proactively addressing things as early as possible can support more effective resolutions to be found and support working relationships going forward.

Some things you may wish to consider include:

Before the conversation Plan Ahead

It is never wise to launch into a difficult conversation in the heat of the moment without planning and ensuring that you have done any required research and collected any required resources. Before tackling a difficult issue, it is a good idea to:

- Consider what happened to necessitate this conversation. Where is your information from – is it something you have observed? If the issue is in relation to actions/behaviours of a staff member, is there any available factual evidence regarding intentions? Have other people contributed to the problem (including yourself)?
- Understand your feelings. Emotions are normal and a natural human response but are they clouding your judgment? Whilst it's important to act quickly with difficult conversations, do you require some time to support the regulation of emotions?
- Think about what you hope to accomplish by having the difficult conversation and who may need to be involved in resolving any issue
- Consider who needs to be present. Initial conversations may be best suited to supervisions where notes are taken and where problems and solutions can be discussed privately. However, this might vary depending on the topic of the difficult conversation: in cases of redundancy, if it impacts all staff it might be better to have the conversation with the full team so that they can act as sources of support to each other and to prevent any Chinese

whispers from those who hear the news first.

- Consider whether additional viewpoints are required prior to the conversation taking place
- Think about how all viewpoints (yours, the member of staff and colleagues) can be discussed and ensure the member of staff has opportunity to clarify their viewpoint as part of the discussion

It's all about the framing

In terms of your own anxiety about the upcoming conversation, it can help to 'reframe' it in your mind. Instead of labelling it as 'difficult' and focusing on potential negative outcomes, focus on constructive outcomes. This conversation will help to strengthen communication between you and your staff member/team and help to find a way forward. For performance management/conduct issues, providing clear, unambiguous and timely feedback can support your staff to address issues prior to it getting to a disciplinary stage. If the situation has already reached the stage of formal action (disciplinary/grievance), having the difficult conversation is still one step closer to resolution.

Get Advice

With any difficult conversations, it is essential that you ensure that you are adhering to the policies and procedures that you have in place, and that you take expert advice where relevant to make sure that you are following employment legislation, particularly when dealing with redundancies, disciplinarys or grievances. ACAS is an excellent source of information, both in terms of written guides but also through their helpline. Our Childcare Business Development Officers are also on hand to provide support, but are not legal experts and so will still signpost off to other sources of expertise where required.

Explore techniques

As a Manager, you may have a typical management/leadership style that you have refined during your time in the position. Is this particular situation, or this particular member of staff, responding well to your usual management style? Is there something you could do differently to improve the outcomes? One technique that you might want to explore is coaching. A 'coach' is not considered necessarily the expert but is there to facilitate the individual to come up with their own solution. Whilst mentoring or training is based on the idea that the 'teacher' is imparting knowledge, coaching is based on the belief that the individual has the capacity to find their own solutions. Coaching can be a great way of empowering staff but also facilitating long term change, as opposed to staff members becoming reliant on their Managers for solutions to future

problems. There are lots of different coaching models around – one of these is called the OSCAR model (not to be confused with our Out of School Childcare Assessment [OSCA]!) and you can read more about this model here.

Consider Mental Health

Difficult conversations may arise from mental health issues (e.g. depression/anxiety leading to performance issues) or they may lead to mental health challenges (e.g. redundancy discussions, disciplinarys). Whilst it is essential that conversations still take place to support solutions (as avoiding the discussion can in itself lead to increased pressure on mental health), it is also important to make sure that mental health is a consideration.

- Be positive and solution focused
- If your employee feels comfortable discussing their mental health, can you confidentially discuss if there are work related triggers/stressors that are impacting on the issue?
- Are they receiving the support they need – is there anything additional (from you or from an external/professional source) that would help?
- Do they have any solutions and if these are not suitable, is there a compromise that could be made?
- Addressing the other points in this article will also help to support mental health.
- Are there adjustments that could be made to the day to day tasks/responsibilities?
- Mind's Managers Guide to Mental Health is a useful source of additional information.
- You must ensure that no adverse action (discrimination, harassment) is taken against an employee with mental health problems (Equality Act, 2010).

Consider when/where

Before you start a difficult conversation, make sure you (and your member of staff) have sufficient time (e.g. 5 minutes before the children arrive is probably not a suitable moment). Also consider where the discussion should take place. Ideally, a quiet, private and calm surrounding is most appropriate. Is there a suitable place within the work place? Should the discussion happen remotely outside of Club hours? Is there another location that would be suitable and support you and your member of staff to feel comfortable and able to speak open and honestly?

During the conversation

Listen

Practice active listening to ensure staff feel heard and valued. Don't assume you know their intentions or the full story. Don't be afraid of silences – if you ask a question, or if you finish making a point, allow the silence that follows. Sometimes people need time to formulate

their thoughts, particularly during difficult conversations, and being too quick to fill the silence might mean that valuable information is overlooked and remains unsaid.

Stick to facts

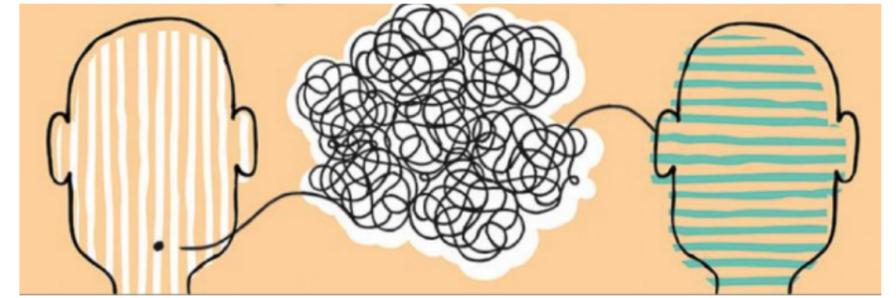
Try to approach the conversation as a neutral third party. Avoid hearsay as much as possible and focus on factual and situational/action-based information rather than criticisms of character/personality.

Focus on solutions

Whilst it is important to address (factually) actions/behaviours/issues that have led to the situation, focusing too much on the 'problem' can leave staff feeling apathetic and uncertain about what the next step is. Try to focus the majority of the discussion on potential solutions. In the case of redundancies where 'solutions' are not possible, focus on being as clear and transparent as possible about what the process is going to be, what will be required from staff and what they can expect from you, with timescales. Set clear targets/objectives and keep a record of what has been agreed and when it will be reviewed.

Offer Support

In cases of performance management or some code of conduct issues, ask the member of staff



what they need to resolve the issue/ improve. Do they need specific support from you? Is there training that could be accessed? Is there another member of staff that could act as a buddy/mentor? Signpost your staff members to external sources of support too where relevant, particularly where you have concerns over their mental health and wellbeing.

After the conversation

Reflect

As human beings we never stop learning, and it is important to take some quiet time to reflect following difficult conversations. What went well? What went less well? What could you do differently next time, or how could you implement changes/strategies to prevent there from being a 'next time'?

Chat it through

Do you have someone you can talk things through with confidentially? We have written previously in Y Bont about the importance of supervisions/opportunities to offload and collaboratively problem solve/reflect. If you have a management committee or business owner that you can do this with, it would be beneficial to arrange a meeting after difficult discussions with staff as part of your reflection process. If you do not have someone within the business that you can speak to, we have previously suggested partnering up with another childcare business (local or further afield) Manager. Always essential to remember Data Protection and Confidentiality within these discussions.

Safe Recruitment Practices

Within your club there can be time implications that cause difficulties to fulfil the administrative and record keeping tasks on a day-to-day basis. Whilst recruitment of staff is desperately needed to ensure you achieve the required staff ratios, it is of paramount importance that whilst recruiting new staff for each role that you ensure you safeguard you, your team of staff and also the children and families that attend your service.

Many Childcare Providers complete strict and robust recruitment processes when employing staff for their Setting, however it is very easy to become complacent and fail in areas where you may have gaps. This may affect the quality of staff you recruit and also put yourself and your team in vulnerable positions. It is so important that you pay attention to the detail of the process to enable you safeguard yourselves, your staff and also the children within your care. Now more than ever we are seeing that there is a high demand for Playwork and Childcare staff across the sector. In order to ensure you fulfil vacancies as well as induct and retain the staff, having a secure system for recruitment processes will enable you to employ a qualified team in a safe and timely manner.

Creating a safer recruitment policy for our organisation will support you to ensure you have overarching safeguarding policies and procedures. This will help you set out your club's commitment to recruiting the most suitable team and by having robust processes will send a clear message to your staff or potential candidates that you prioritise the safety and wellbeing of all who access your provision.

When creating your policy, you should include a clear process that helps you to identify gaps in the candidate's application. This will support you to have a clear picture of the candidates, reason for applying to your provision, understanding their work ethos and values. In turn this will support you to find the candidates that want to be employed for the long term. Having a clear vision from the start of your advertisements through to you offering the position will enable you to employ the best candidate. Cutting corners within this process will enable candidates who may not have the correct justification for the role will potentially impact upon your time and concerns moving forward as well as putting the staff and children at potential risk.

It is important that you question and challenge any areas that may not be clear within this process. Ensure you understand why a candidate may not have been working for a period of time and the reasoning is justified. Questioning and understanding gaps in employment will strengthen your process and enable you to clearly identify the candidate you desire. When carrying out DBS checks it is important to understand that there is a responsibility to disclose concerns regarding the candidate and also question any disclosures made during the time of interview.

Top 10 for safer recruitment

1. Clearly define job description and job specification whilst advertising the position.
2. Identify that the position requires a DBS within the advertisement.
3. Ensure that the application and CV correspond with dates, times and

roles and question or identify gaps in employment with clear responses.

4. Identify that the candidate is suitable to work with children and young people through having a robust selection process and through completion of a health and suitability declaration (a template can be found in Step 11 of our Stepping Out resource on our members area)
5. Challenge and question any safeguarding queries
6. Inform the candidate of the safeguarding policies, procedures and processes
7. Ensure reference checks are carried out from reliable referees: most recent employer, previous employers. Any character references are in addition to employment verified references.
8. Provide a robust induction process that covers safeguarding practices and procedures.
9. Risk assess and respond to concerns about the suitability of employees and volunteers once they have begun their role within a probationary period
10. Ensure there are ongoing through supervisions and appraisals that provide opportunities to raise safeguarding concerns from the employer and the employee.

Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs have a template policy within Stepping Out resources and further support resources that will enable you to create a clearly defined recruitment process that will safeguard all staff and children supporting you to create a positive and environment for all to thrive. Look out for our webinars on recruitment in early 2022.

Activities

Following on from our successful 'Tesco Grow your Own feast Project, why not continue to forage in your garden and woodlands this autumn/ winter? bring the outdoors in with our ideas for environmentally friendly Christmas foraging decorations.

Remember not everything you forage is safe to eat/touch. Some plants and berries can make you very ill. As always ensure you have risk assessments in place when doing any activity but especially when foraging in nature. Be aware of individual allergies and ensure adequate supervision at all times to keep everyone safe

Rustic woodlands Wreath

What you need

- Twigs, branches and stems (dogwood, oak, birch, willow, hazel, olive work best)
- Evergreen foliage: ivy, holly, mistletoe, eucalyptus
- String/twine/ thin wire
- Cardboard / newspaper
- Pens and pencils
- Scissors

What you need to do

1. Using the dry twigs and branches, bunch together and start forming a circle shape
2. Secure with string or wire.
3. Choose pieces of evergreen foliage and thread through the twigs and branches (use as many as you like!)
4. When you are happy with the shape, create a loop at the top which you will use to hang the wreath.
5. Using recycled cardboard/boxes/paper you can create extra shapes or features for your wreath such as stars or snowflakes.
6. Hang your finished wreath on your door or wall



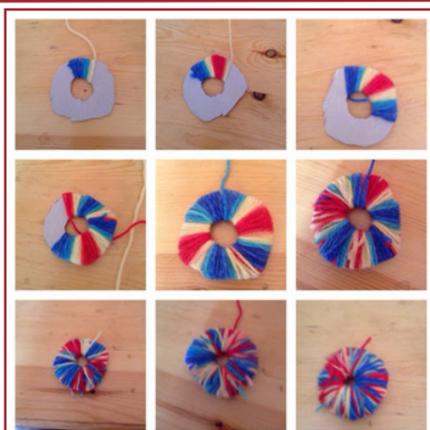
Christmas Nature Garlands

What you need

- Foraged foliage such as sprigs of fir tree, holly, mistletoe, eucalyptus, winter berries
- Ribbons and strings for decoration
- Scissors
- Glue
- Items for decoration such as bows, glitter, confetti

What you need to do

1. Cut ribbons/ string to the desired length for your garland
2. Cut smaller pieces of ribbon/string and tie to one end of your chosen foliage
3. Tie the foliage along the long ribbon/string, equal distances apart or however you chose.
4. Use bows/glitter/confetti etc to decorate the garland to give it an extra Christmassy look
5. When its dry the garland is ready to hang



DIY Pom-poms

- Make cardboard pom-pom templates.
- Cut out the circles.
- Start wrapping yarn around the template.
- Wrap the yarn until the ring is full.
- Cut around the edge of the ring.
- Tie the cut yarn pieces together.
- Shape the pom-pom.
- Fluff the pom-pom and finish trimming

Pom-poms make beautiful tree decorations; they can also be strung together to make garlands or used to make fantastic wreaths like the one pictured.



Mini Pinecone Christmas trees

You will need

- Pine cones
- Poster paints /glitter/ confetti (optional)
- Air drying clay

What you need to do

1. Take a small piece of clay, roll into a ball and flatten on a hard surface (about the size of a 50p coin)
2. Push a pine cone into the centre of the clay and leave to set overnight in a warm room.
3. When dry you can paint your cone green.
4. Decorate your mini 'Christmas tree' using coloured paints, glitter, berries etc
5. When dry your decoration will make a lovely table decoration or alternatively add string to the top and you can hang it on your Christmas tree.



DIY printed wrapping paper & Natural gift tags

What you need

- A few potatoes
- A knife (Supervision required)
- Poster paints
- A3 sheets of paper/ Wall paper/ Brown paper
- String / twine
- Foraged sprigs of foliage, Holly, Berries, eucalyptus, mistletoe

What you need to do

1. Cut the potatoes in half and dry with a cloth
2. Using a pencil draw Christmas shapes on each half
3. Cut around the shape with a knife (supervision required for this bit as it can be quite tricky for little fingers)
4. Dip your potato stampers in the paints and stamp patterns on the paper of your choice.
5. When dry you have a beautiful and unique piece of wrapping paper to give to friends and family.
6. To finish, wrap your gift and tie with string/twine. As a natural gift tag use foraged sprigs of foliage, Holly, Berries, eucalyptus, mistletoe for a special finishing touch



Salt dough Christmas decorations

Makes 1 ball - Prep 10 mins - Cook time 3 hours

You will need:

- 1 cup full of plain flour (about 250g)
- Half a cup of table salt (about 125g)
- Half a cup of water (about 125ml)

Method

1. Preheat the oven to its lowest setting and line a baking tray with parchment paper
2. Mix the flour and the salt in a large bowl. Add the water and stir until it comes together in to a ball.
3. Transfer the dough on to a floured work surface and shape in to your chosen model. You can roll it out and cut shapes, numbers or letters using biscuit cutters, or make anything you can think of.
4. Put your finished items on the lined baking tray and bake for 3 hours or until solid.
5. Leave to cool and then paint



Meet the Playworkers!

Julie Hall

Venerable Edward Morgan Fun Club, Flintshire

How long have you worked in the Out of School Childcare Sector? Worked in sector 13 years, Out of School Club 12 months

What made you want to become a Playworker?

Love working with children. Like to make a difference with each and every child. Especially finding out what each child likes to do and getting to know them.

What is the best part of your job? Seeing the smiles on the children's faces. Getting the children to interact and play together

What has been your biggest challenge as a Playworker, and how do you/will you overcome it? Deciding what works best with the children and doing the planning to suit and change were needed on a weekly basis.

If you could change one thing about the sector, what would it be and why? Nothing I can think off as happy at the moment and get all help that I need.

Michelle Simpson

O.J.Rocks Fun Club, Flintshire

How long have you worked in the Out of School Childcare Sector? 22 years

What made you want to become a Playworker? I fell into the job by accident, but love it

What is the best part of your job? Seeing children play and enjoying themselves with their friends

What has been your biggest challenge as a Playworker, and how do you/will you overcome it? Covid 19 has been hard, stressful and very difficult to maintain the service that parents have come to expect.

If you could change one thing about the sector, what would it be and why? The ever-changing rules and regulations of the CIW before Covid, linked with paper work, rules and restrictions.



Playworkers are your most valuable asset. The job they do is both skilful, professional and of the highest importance. They understand the needs of children and the drive and benefits of freely chosen play. They build relationships with children that allow children to feel safe, respected and appreciated. They deserve to be celebrated and to that end we have dedicated an entire page to them in Y Bont. We asked Playworkers up and down Wales what they loved about their job, what their challenges have been and how they have overcome them.

Here are the voices of the workforce in North Wales.

Valerie Prout

Halkyn Mountain Kids Club, Flintshire

How long have you worked in the Out of School Childcare Sector? 8 years

What made you want to become a Playworker? I've been in some sort of childcare for 30 something years and when my daughter took on the running of the club she asked me if I would like to be a Playworker so I did.

What is the best part of your job? Seeing the children Happy and having fun.

What has been your biggest challenge as a Playworker, and how do you/will you overcome it? When I have children that don't want to do anything and looks fed up, but I find that just having a general chat brings up why, either they have had a problem or just tired and wants mum, each individual is different

If you could change one thing about the sector, what would it be and why? The school is great and we can use the hall and all of the outside amenities, but it would be great if we could have our own room, where we can decorate it with some of the children's creations.

Kathleen Griffiths

Temps, Wrexham

How long have you worked in the Out of School Childcare Sector? 7 years

What made you want to become a Playworker? Retired from work and always wanted to work with children

What is the best part of your job? Watching the children especially the younger ones and how they interact with one another

What has been your biggest challenge as a Playworker, and how do you/will you overcome it? Keeping the children occupied. Some have very weak attention span and it's hard to keep their attention especially if they want to do their own thing but it is very rewarding when they do their own thing to watch them giving their whole attention to what they are doing.

If you could change one thing about the sector, what would it be and why? I really cannot think of anything I would change. TEMPS work very well and all the children seem to enjoy attending.

Beryl Blackmore

TEMPS at The Rofft school, Wrexham

How long have you worked in the Out of School Childcare Sector? 32 years

What made you want to become a Playworker? I wanted children to be able to access out of school care on the School site as I felt that it would give a more secure environment known to them with staff they were seeing on a daily basis. Parents would feel confident to be able to undertake Work or Training knowing their children were happy.

What is the best part of your job? Welcoming children on a daily basis After school to a friendly, fun place, while their parents /, carer's work.

What has been your biggest challenge as a Playworker, and how do you/will you overcome it? As Manager and Playworker keeping staff happy and in employment is the biggest challenge moment

If you could change one thing about the sector, what would it be and why? More support to fund Holiday Clubs

Dorota Szymanska

V.E.M After School Club, Flintshire

How long have you worked in the Out of School Childcare Sector? 2 years 10 months

What made you want to become a Playworker? Help children to learn new skills, make new friends

What is the best part of your job? Helping young children to feel comfortable, relaxing and happy

What has been your biggest challenge as a Playworker, and how do you/will you overcome it? Understand problems of young children, talk to them about their concerns or worries. I achieved this by conversation with them built on trust

Gemma A

Halkyn Mountain Kids' Club, Flintshire

How long have you worked in the Out of School Childcare Sector? 15 years

What made you want to become a Playworker? I enjoy working with children

What is the best part of your job? Being with the children

What has been your biggest challenge as a Playworker, and how do you/will you overcome it? Going back after a break (sick with Covid)

If you could change one thing about the sector, what would it be and why? Booking in system, to make it easier

Alison Clare Leonard

Halkyn Mountain Kids' Club, Flintshire

How long have you worked in the Out of School Childcare Sector? 2 Years

What made you want to become a Playworker? Asked to join the club

What is the best part of your job? Having fun with the children

What has been your biggest challenge as a Playworker, and how do you/will you overcome it? Children with additional needs, but experience has now helped

Susan Price

Temps Rofft, Wrexham

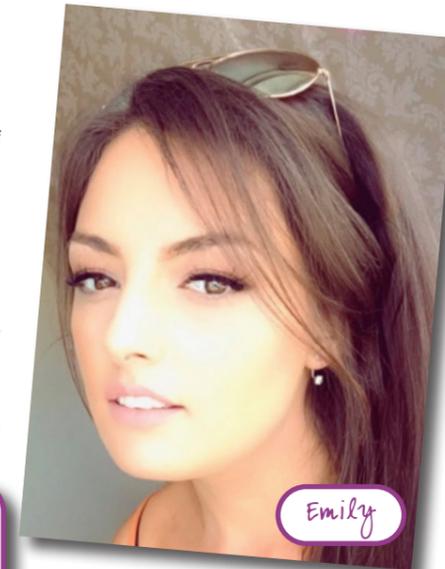
How long have you worked in the Out of School Childcare Sector? 9 years

What made you want to become a Playworker? I have been a mid day supervisor for many years and enjoy working with children

What is the best part of your job? Being with the children and getting to know them and interacting with them

What is the best part of your job? Watching the children especially the younger ones and how they interact with one another

What has been your biggest challenge as a Playworker, and how do you/will you overcome it? Going to college and completing my child care qualification level 2. I just got on with it and gave myself a timeframe to complete it by



Emily

Emily Cruse Harris

Venerable Edward Morgan Fun Club, Flintshire

How long have you worked in the Out of School Childcare Sector? 10 months

What made you want to become a Playworker? I have worked in nurseries since leaving school 15 years ago and decided to work in a school it was the best decision I've ever made

What is the best part of your job? Working with children of all ages and watching them develop.

What has been your biggest challenge as a Playworker, and how do you/will you overcome it? Dealing with older children's behaviour, I think experience has helped me over the last 10 months as I have only worked with under 5s in the past.



Meet the Playworkers!

Alisha Mayall-Pierce

Kingfisher House Day Nursery, Flintshire

How long have you worked in the Out of School Childcare Sector? 4 years ish

What made you want to become a Playworker? The feedback from children and their response to us as adults. They deserve a good start in life and we can give that to them

What is the best part of your job? The Children

What has been your biggest challenge as a Playworker, and how do you/will you overcome it? Dealing with challenging behaviour

If you could change one thing about the sector, what would it be and why? Resources accessible

Gemma B

Halkyn Mountain Kids' Club, Flintshire

How long have you worked in the Out of School Childcare Sector? 10 years

What made you want to become a Playworker? Studied child care and loved working with children

What is the best part of your job? Working with the children

What has been your biggest challenge as a Playworker, and how do you/will you overcome it? Doing my levels in Playwork and doing my level 3 now



Jane Weston

Temps, Wrexham

How long have you worked in the Out of School Childcare Sector? 20 years

What made you want to become a Playworker? Enjoy working with children

What is the best part of your job? Watching the children grow in confidence

What has been your biggest challenge as a Playworker, and how do you/will you overcome it? Keeping children engaged in activities and making things accessible for all

If you could change one thing about the sector, what would it be and why? The play Setting runs very well as is!



Sam Baines

Kingfisher House Day Nursery, Flintshire

How long have you worked in the Out of School Childcare Sector? 9 years

What made you want to become a Playworker? Love of children

What is the best part of your job? Making a difference to children's lives & helping them to progress

What has been your biggest challenge as a Playworker, and how do you/will you overcome it? Wanting further responsibility.

If you could change one thing about the sector, what would it be and why? More resources for the children, indoor & outdoor

Susan Threadgold

Temps, Wrexham

How long have you worked in the Out of School Childcare Sector? 11 years 8 months

What made you want to become a Playworker? I was made redundant from my previous job

What is the best part of your job? The children

What has been your biggest challenge as a Playworker, and how do you/will you overcome it? Dealing with Covid. I have adapted to the new rules which are in place

If you could change one thing about the sector, what would it be and why? A better rate of pay with the responsibility of looking after children