

Dear sirs/madam at CMA

We are a small term time only setting which caters to 24 children per day. We have been open since 1998 with an outstanding practice as deemed by Ofsted . We are open from 8.30 am to 2.30 pm for funded children offering free full day care for these core hours or they can chose to attend 8.30 am to 11.30 am or 12.30pm to 3.30 for free. In order for us to make some money we give parents the option of breakfast club from 8 am ad hoc or to stay for lunch till 12.30 or to stay till 3 or 3.30. We charge £10 per hour for our private fees and hours which include all extras. Funded places are free but we lose £3.50 per funded hour for three and four year olds so we charge for extras such as consumables and extra curricular activities which is optional according to the government.

Parents are aware of this some pay some do not. So the children that do not pay are offered other activities but how can you tell a child that they cannot attend the dance class or the sports class. The loss of being able to charge for extras and additional services has had an enormous impact on our businesses with the nursery stomaching the loss of revenue to pay for this

The government funding does not actually cover our costs

Using the word "optional" makes our service seem less valuable or necessary. If something is "optional," it can imply that it's not essential or that customers can easily do without it. Previously we were allowed to charge the shortfall of our fee as 'Additional Service'. Parents were happy, we were happy. We covered our costs as a small setting which allowed us to waive fees completely for families most in need. It also allowed us to provide apprenticeship training schemes for young adults in our community because we could justify the extra cost.

We had several families where our fee was waived due to low income

We are flexible because we are parents ourselves and understand that life is complicated sometimes. We have never had to question this before because our business model allowed us to feed back into our community.

Now we have to give parents the option to 'opt' out where in fact, they are actually 'opting in'.

We have been told by our LA that we cannot discriminate against parents who choose to opt out of voluntary contributions. This is impossible to provide. Our whole ethos is around high staff ratio in order to provide the absolute best childcare and education we can.

Most of our activities go way and beyond the EYFS. Large group activities are minimal, we provide 1:1 or 1:2 ratios fir children who need speech and language We pay for dance classes, sports classes and pay for a visit from wild animals

All of these cover the EYFS but go far beyond and provide our children with the skills needed to become valuable members of our society.

Allowing us to add 'Additional Services' or 'Enhanced Provision' to our invoices allows us to place a value on the service we are offering above and beyond the government's offering. This is actually the shortfall of our basic fee to run our business but the department of education call this a top up but this is the little bit of money that we need to survive as every nursery setting is different It's not a "one size fits all"

There has been Lots of publicity around blaming private nurseries, painting us as the greedy vilian and the govt as the raining hero with free/optional childcare!

All while pushing their school nurserys.

Government Pitching parents against nursery's instead of us all pulling together!

Divide and conquer..

This isn't helping nursery's, painting a distorted perception of what is actually happening and destroying a whole private sectors reputation and ongoing business

We are also a business and I'm sure HMRC would have sobering to say about us saying to parents "oh you don't have to pay for this service if you don't want to " and dropping our profits on purpose ?

We are the only business that are being treated so unfairly by the government because they want to be seen to be giving parents FREE CHILDCARE where in fact it is funded by the tax payer and our businesses

You can't go into a supermarket and only pay for what you want to pay for or go into a shoe shop and just buy one shoe, or go into a restaurant and opt in or opt out of paying for your meal?

The funding is also for 38 weeks of the year what about our staffs holiday pay, national insurance, pension etc that needs to be paid out of that £6.50 per hour. It just does not add up

The funding should be given to parents through their government account which can then be used to pay for childcare giving parents autonomy in deciding what to pay for etc and what setting to take their child to

Please, please look at this carefully So far this year 3 term time only settings have closed in our area because of schools opening nurseries and low numbers attending

I look forward to hearing from you and hoping that you will look at this fairly. The big chains put extra fees onto the private paying hours and they charge parents over the year splitting the funding into 22 weeks over the year so that the parents have to pay the additional fees. They seem to get away with all sorts of

Kind regards



A Desperate owner trying to keep her head above the ground feeding her family