

Good afternoon,

I am writing regarding the statement of scope and to ask that this remains wide, you cannot look at what providers are charging without taking into account the funding rate they are paid and all the restrictions surrounding this which make charges necessary. Funding adequacy needs to be looked at as at present the funding rate we receive for 3-4 year olds is £6.09 whilst it costs us £7.54 to provide education and care with no extras. The local authority takes part of the funding before it gets to us but provides little for it except extra work and a funding agreement with lots of rules, all we get are online forms and maybe an online teams meeting, there is no longer even a telephone line.

There are a lot of things that need to change within childcare, we are not respected or listened to. The government spent 130 million advertising what a good job they were doing but no-one could comment in case they disagreed. There is talk about supporting working parents but those who work in childcare are also working parents, why should they have to work for minimum wage in such a responsible job, that is why a full market investigation is needed.

We can no longer afford to provide snack, extra activities or celebrations for free as the money is just not there. The large majority of childcare is provided by independent settings and childminders so why is the majority of evidence going to come from the biggest operators as their experience will be completely different. I notice that it seems preschools don't even seem to be important enough to be mentioned but we are part of the sector as well.

Please make this an investigation that works for providers as well as parents, we have been providing evidence for years that we are struggling and so many settings have already closed, we are constantly ignored and dismissed.

With thanks for what is hopefully a thorough investigation.

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Squirrels preschool

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