



2022-0000591WQPO

Will Quince MP

Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Children and Families

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Rt Hon Penny Mordaunt MP

By email: penny.mordaunt.mp@parliament.uk

31 January 2022

Dear Penny,

Thank you for your email of 6 January, enclosing correspondence from your constituent, Ms Cheryl Hadland, Managing Director of Tops Day Nurseries, about sustainability content in early years education and early years funding. I am replying as the minister responsible for this policy area.

With regard to Ms Hadland's comments about sustainability content in early years education, we are in the process of developing a draft Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy for publication in April 2022. We are seeking feedback from stakeholders like Ms Hadland and are grateful for these comments that she and her group have been able to provide in order to feed into that strategy, in particular, regarding early years climate education initiatives and the inspection framework.

We will be bearing in mind Ms Hadland's feedback as these issues are considered and discussed in the months leading up to the publishing of the department's strategy in April and beyond.

On the broader issue of funding, the department has spent over £3.5 billion in each of the past three years on our early education entitlements and the government will continue to support families with their childcare costs.

At the Spending Review on 27 October, we announced that we are investing additional funding for the early years entitlements worth £160 million in 2022 to 2023, £180 million in 2023 to 2024, and £170 million in 2024 to 2025, compared to the current year. This is for local authorities (LAs) to increase hourly rates paid to childcare providers for the government's free childcare entitlement offers, and reflects cost pressures as well as anticipated changes in the number of eligible children.

For 2022 to 2023, we will increase the hourly funding rates for all LAs by 21p an hour for the two-year-old entitlement and, for the vast majority of areas, by 17p an hour for the three- and four-year-old entitlement.

The government has confirmed continuation of maintained nursery school supplementary funding throughout the Spending Review period, providing the sector with long-term certainty. For 2022 to 2023, we will increase the maintained nursery schools supplementary hourly funding rate by 3.5%, equivalent to the increase in the 3- and 4-year-old hourly funding rates.

On the subject of purchasing solar panels and chargers for electric cars, the early years sector has also benefitted from business rates holidays and business loans and will continue to have access to the Business Rates Relief Nurseries Discount available until 31 March.

Eligible nurseries may also access the Recovery Loan Scheme as set out by the Chancellor of the Exchequer on 3 March. Further details regarding this loan scheme are available at: tinyurl.com/Yc3dvvbss.

An additional £102 million was announced on 21 December as part of a discretionary grant to LAs. The intention is that this will support local businesses who have been impacted financially by coronavirus (COVID-19) but who are not eligible for the hospitality, leisure and culture grants. If impacted, all early year providers should contact their early years team within their LA in the first instance.

Once again, we are very grateful for the points that Ms Hadland has raised, and will give them careful consideration moving forward. We will continue to press the importance of the early years sector right across government.

Thank you for writing about this important matter. I hope Ms Hadland finds this reply useful.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Will', written in a cursive style.

Will Quince MP
Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Children and Families