



CHILDCARE NETWORK NEWSLETTER SUMMER 2026

CHILDCARE SUFFICIENCY ASSESSMENT 2027

5 VERY FAST YEARS HAVE FLOWN PAST AND WE ARE PREPARING TO START THE CHILDCARE SUFFICIENCY ASSESSMENT WHICH WILL BE SUBMITTED IN JUNE 2027.

AS PART OF THE CONSULATION PROCESS WE WILL BE ENGAGING WITH A NUMBER OF STAKEHOLDERS AND PERSONS WITH AN INTEREST IN CHILDCARE.

THIS WILL INCLUDE CHILDCARE PROVIDERS AND WE WILL BE CONTACTING YOU IN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS TO GATHER YOUR CONCERNS AND IDEAS FOR THE FUTURE OF CHILDCARE IN TORFAEN.

IF THERE ARE ANY QUESTIONS YOU FEEL WE SHOULD BE ADDING TO OUR CONSULATION , PLEASE EMAIL HANNAH.BEDFORD@TORFAEN.GOV.UK

Contact Info

Email: fis@torfaen.gov.uk

Phone: 0800 0196 330

Website: www.torfaenfis.gov.uk

<https://www.torfaenfis.org.uk/en/providers/childcare-network-newsletter>



Important Notices

Nicola Bartlett
Childcare Manager



Hello everyone,

My name is Nicola Bartlett, and I am delighted to introduce myself as the newly appointed Childcare Manager for Torfaen.

It is a privilege to join a service that plays such a vital role in supporting children, families, and communities, and I am very much looking forward to working with colleagues across the authority.

I come from an education background, having been a practising teacher for 25 years and an education leader and manager for the past 18. Throughout my career, I have been committed to improving outcomes for children, young people, and families through high quality provision, inclusion, and strong partnership working. My experience spans early years, safeguarding, leadership development, and service improvement, and I am excited to bring this knowledge into my new role.

My leadership style is supportive, collaborative, and solution focused. I believe in valuing everyone's contribution and creating environments where people feel heard, respected, and empowered. Building positive relationships and fostering psychological safety are central to how I lead, and I am committed to working alongside teams to understand what is working well and where I can best support you.

Please feel free to get in touch at any time; I am always happy to connect, listen, and learn. I look forward to meeting you all and working together to continue delivering strong, inclusive, and high quality childcare services for our communities.

Kind regards, Nicola
Nicola.Bartlett@torfaen.gov.uk



Gwasanaeth Gwybodaeth i Deuluoedd
Torfaen
Family Information Service



Important Notices



Department
for Work &
Pensions

canolfanbydgwaith
jobcentreplus

Careers into Childcare **Work Skills and Employment Pathway**

In partnership with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), we are currently piloting the Wales Skills Employment Pathway (WSEP) to support recruitment and retention within the childcare sector.

The pathway focuses on upskilling individuals by providing key qualifications, including Safeguarding, Paediatric First Aid, and Food Hygiene. Participants also complete a work experience placement, giving them valuable real-life insight into working in the childcare sector and helping to build their confidence and practical skills.

For childcare settings, this provides an opportunity to assess whether a participant is a suitable match for their provision, with the potential to progress the individual onto an apprenticeship pathway.

If you are interested in your setting taking part in this new pilot, please contact fis@torfaen.gov.uk

Flying Start Expansion

We have recently created a "Becoming a Flying Start Provider" page on the FIS website

<https://www.torfaenfis.org.uk/en/providers/becoming-a-flying-start-provider>

Did you know that our applications process is open all the time?
We are really keen to have more childcare settings offering Flying Start.

If you want to find out more, please contact the Childcare Development Officers on Childcaresupport@torfaen.gov.uk



Important Notices



The Gwent Best Start in Life Community of Practice

Giving **EVERY** baby and child the best start in life



Connect • Learn • Share good practice

Launched in January 2026, the Gwent Best Start in Life Community of Practice brings together Early Years professionals across Gwent who work with families from pregnancy through to age 7.

The Community of Practice has been created:

- As a shared space to connect, exchange learning and strengthen how we work together to give every baby and child the best possible start in life.
- To amplify the voices and lived experiences of babies, children and families
- To create regular opportunities for shared learning, reflection and improvement

As a member, you'll receive:

- Quarterly e-newsletters and e-bulletins, informed by everyday practice and family insight
- Invites to our bi-monthly webinars, led by expert speakers, focused on early years topics that support your role and practice.
- Opportunities to share resources, learning and examples of good practice

👉 Sign up [here](#) to become a member or scan the QR code



Training links

Are you Interested in signing up for a qualification with Trainers that are recommended by 91% of our Learners?

You can gain a Playwork qualification through a 12 week course that inspires and informs an already skilled workforce to understand and implement the Playwork approach.

Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs is experienced at developing and delivering workshops and qualifications to improve the quality of care, play and learning provided to children in clubs. Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs is an approved centre with the Awarding Organisation, CACHE, for the delivery of accredited Playwork and Assessing qualifications.

For more information visit

<https://clybiauplantcymru.org/cy/all-training-and-events/>



Training links

Traffic Light Tool Training

Brook's Traffic Light Tool helps professionals identify, understand, and respond to sexual behaviours in children and young people. It uses a simple green, amber, red system to indicate whether behaviours are developmentally appropriate, concerning, or harmful.

The training is relevant for Early Years and sections of the toolkit appropriate for pre-school children aged 0 – 4 years as well as older age ranges.

The Traffic Light Tool is an easy step by step guide to use in settings and supports pre-school staff in recognising appropriate and inappropriate sexual behaviour.

The training is being delivered by Healthy Schools Leads and has been funded by Public Health Wales.

What Brook provides:

- Sexual health and wellbeing information and advice
 - Free and confidential clinics
- Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)
 - Online resources
- Training for professionals

Training Outcomes:

- Identify sexual behaviour as typical, problematic, or harmful
- Understand what the behaviour communicates and why it occurs
- Respond appropriately based on motivation, communication, and severity

Book your FREE place now!

Brook Traffic Light Tool Training June 29th 9.00-12.00 ONLINE – Fill in form

Brook Traffic Light Tool Training July 6th 1.00-4.00 ONLINE – Fill in form



Training links

New Skills For Life Early Years course Agored

This is a 2 day standardised programme for Childcare staff. It has been developed by Dietitians across Wales and will be delivered by the local Public Health Dietetics team. We will provide you with food and nutrition knowledge and skills specific to the Early Years. The course is accredited with Agored Cymru at Level 2.

2026 Dates

- 23rd & 30th June – Caerphilly (St James ICC).
- 16th & 23rd September – Monmouthshire (TBC)
 - 8th & 15th October – Torfaen (Civic Centre Pontypool – tbc).
- 10th & 17th November – Newport (Newport civic centre– tbc).

2027 Dates

- 13th & 20th January – Blaenau Gwent (Owl Room Blaina Integrated Children's Centre–tbc).
- 11th & 18th February – Caerphilly (tbc).
- 9th & 16th March 2027 – Newport (tbc)

Click her to book your place

<https://bookings.cloud.microsoft/book/EarlyyearsBookingSystem@wales.nhs.uk/?ismsaljsauthenabled=true>



Training links

EY Update session

This 2 hour virtual session delivered by the Public Health Dietetics team is for those that have previously attended and achieved the Level 2 Community Food and Nutrition Skills for the Early Years qualification and requires a two yearly update.

We will cover the most up-to-date evidence-based nutrition information for young children and discuss any updates to current guidelines and recommendations.

2026 Dates

May 18th 9:00 am – 11:00 am
September 25th 14:00pm– 16:00pm

2027 Dates

December 1st 16:00pm– 18:00 pm
March 5th 9:00am– 11:00am

Please be advised that attendance at these sessions is required two years after completing the Level 2 Early Years Nutrition course with us.

If you have already completed the course and need to update, please use the link below

<https://bookings.cloud.microsoft/book/EarlyYearsupdatesession@nhswales365.onmicrosoft.com/?ismsaljsauthenabed=true>



Funding and Links:

Grants to Support Early Years Development for Deaf Children (UK)

Grants of up to £10,000 are available through the National Deaf Children's Society's Community Grants Programme for community groups, charities, and not-for-profit organisations supporting deaf children and their families across the UK.

In this round, funding will support projects and activities that promote the development of deaf children in their early years (ages 0–5). This stage is crucial, particularly for children who may face challenges with language, communication, and social skills without the right support.

Projects may involve families, professionals, and older deaf children, provided they contribute to early years development.

Funding can cover costs such as:

- venue hire.
- Transport.
- promotional costs.
- wages for sessional workers, interpreters, and language tutors.
- equipment that is essential for the project, such as play equipment or technology.

Applications are accepted on a rolling basis, with set assessment dates throughout the year.





Funding and Links:

Grants for the Planting of Trees, Hedges & Orchards (UK).

The Tree Council has announced that its Branching Out Fund is open for applications, offering small grants to support community tree planting projects across the UK.

Grants of £250 to £2,500 are available for projects in England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland.

Eligible applicants include community groups, schools, colleges, universities, Tree Warden Networks, parish or town councils, tenants' and residents' associations, community-funded nurseries or care homes, community interest companies limited by guarantee, and small registered charities.

Applicants must have written permission for the planting site.

Funding is intended for trees, hedging, hedgerow trees, and orchards, together with establishment items such as guards, ties, stakes, mulch, peat-free compost, and some irrigation equipment.

The Tree Council is looking for strong community involvement, good value, local knowledge, and clear aftercare plans, with larger requests expected to show broader project design and volunteer-led delivery.

Professional labour, heavy equipment hire and peat-based products are not normally funded.

The deadline is midnight on 19 July 2026, although the fund may close earlier if all money is allocated.

Successful applicants are usually notified within five to six weeks, and all funded planting must be completed and claimed by 14 March 2027.





Funding and Links:

Grants Available for Digital, Environmental & Education Projects (UK).

Telecommunications company Cellnex has reopened its Community Fund, offering grants of up to £5,000 to charities, CICs and not-for-profit groups across the UK.

The fund supports projects that strengthen communities, build digital confidence, and improve the environment in local authority areas where Cellnex UK operates.

Funding is available for activities under four themes:

- Digital Inclusion and Skills – helping people get online, build digital skills, or use technology with confidence.
- Circular Economy – reducing waste, encouraging repair and reuse, or supporting sustainable use of materials.
- Biodiversity and Conservation – improving local nature, protecting wildlife habitats, or supporting community environmental action.
- AI and Education – building awareness of artificial intelligence, responsible use of technology or STEM learning.

Unregistered community groups may apply through an accountable body.

Applications can be submitted at any time, with decisions usually made within five weeks



Spotlight on our Settings

We know there are so many wonderful things happening across our childcare settings, and we'd love to help you celebrate them!

Have you recently marked a special achievement, completed a project, or have an example of great practice you're proud of? Sharing your story can inspire others and showcase the fantastic work taking place across Torfaen.

Whether it's a small success or a big milestone, we want to hear from you!
Send your stories and photos to: fis@torfaen.gov.uk

Let's shine a light on the amazing work you do every day



NDNA have kindly shared some information which might be of interest to you

- Case Study – [Flying Start The Tendering Process . Where are we now?](#)
- Parent factsheets:

<https://ndna.org.uk/product-category/parent-factsheets/>

- Free factsheets for the sector, including Welsh Language, anti-racists practice, curriculum and business support

<https://ndna.org.uk/product-category/wales-early-years-factsheets/>