

Annual Report

2024 - 2025



Early Years
Wales
Blynyddoedd
Cynnar Cymru

Chairperson's Report



It is my privilege to present this year's Trustee Annual Report, reflecting on a period of both challenge and progress for Early Years Wales.

We continue to operate in a climate where financial pressures—both personal and organisational—are felt acutely across our sector. Despite this, our unwavering commitment to children in their early years remains central to our mission. We believe that investing in early childhood is not only essential for individual development but also foundational to a thriving society in Wales.

In 2024/25, Early Years Wales took the bold step of offering free membership to all settings and individuals. This initiative, funded through our internal reserves, was designed to alleviate financial burdens and ensure that access to our support and resources remained inclusive. This decision reflects our values and our belief in the power of collective action to support children and families.

Alongside this, our Board of Trustees has driven a significant expansion in our activities. We have increased our advocacy efforts, contributed to policy development, delivered high-quality training, and enhanced our professional services. These actions are part of our strategic commitment to being a leading voice and support system for the early years sector in Wales.

Throughout the year, we have actively represented our members in Senedd discussions, policy advisory groups, and community forums. We have published thought leadership pieces, updated key policies and practice guidance, and shared these widely through our digital platforms. Our aim is to promote best practice and elevate the profile of early years care across Wales.



Looking ahead, we recognise the importance of the upcoming Senedd elections. We are working proactively with stakeholders to ensure that the needs of children, families, and early years providers are firmly embedded in political discourse. In 2025, we will launch our manifesto, outlining practical and impactful recommendations to strengthen early years provision in Wales.

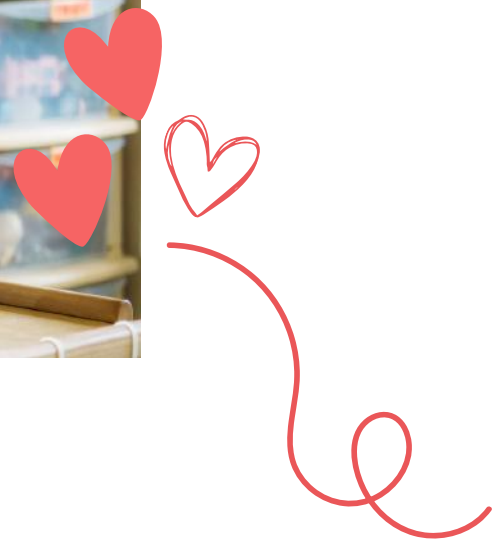
We are proud of the achievements detailed in this Report and remain committed to deepening our impact in 2025/26.

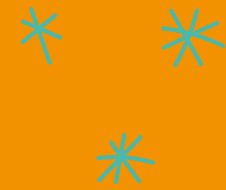
Our vision is clear: every child in Wales should have the opportunity to play, learn, and thrive.

By working collaboratively with our members, partners, and the Welsh Government, we believe this vision is not only achievable but within reach.

Wales is uniquely positioned to lead in early years development—large enough to make a meaningful difference, yet small enough to foster genuine collaboration. Together, we can build a future where every child is supported to reach their full potential.

Dr David Dalimore
Chair of Trustees





If you're not already following the brilliant work of Early Years Wales, now's the time.

Championing quality early childhood education across Wales, they are leading the way in supporting practitioners, settings, and families, with a clear focus on children's rights, play-based pedagogy, and community-rooted practice.

From practical resources to professional development, they're a powerful force in ensuring every child gets the best start in life.

Truly impressed by their values, voice and vision. This is what it looks like when a sector is supported with purpose."

Dr Aaron Bradbury, Principal Lecturer Early Childhood Studies, Nottingham Trent University (via LinkedIn)





Photo credits (clockwise): Poppins Daycare, Usk Nursery, Llanybydder Family Centre, Mrs Puddleduck Day Nursery

Our Objectives and Aims

Early Years Wales aims to support a high-quality early years sector in Wales, working with providers to support every child in Wales having the best start in life and creating the conditions for each child to play, learn and thrive.

The charity aims to:

- Provide support and guidance including upon governance, regulation, planning, quality improvement and workforce development to organisation and individuals that provide for the education, development and care of children in their early years (age 0-7 years); and
- Encouraging parents, carers, and families of children in their early years (aged 0-7 years) to understand their needs and to provide for their needs and to provide for their needs by engaging them in activities that promote their education, development, and care.

Early Years Wales achieves these aims through conducting research, providing advice, publishing and distributing information, cooperating with other professional bodies, and utilising funds in-line with the Charities aims and objectives. The Charity works as a membership organisation, collecting membership fees from its members within Wales, and using these funds to support the services and publications listed above.

The Trustees have paid due regard to guidance issued by the Charity Commission's public benefit guidance in deciding what activities the Charity should undertake and in planning future activities. Due diligence is given to how future activities will contribute to strategic aims and align with the aims and objectives.

Our Strategic Pillars

With over 60-years of sector experience and extensive staff knowledge, Early Years Wales is a trusted organisation for working with the sector and for providing research based and evidence-led policy and practice support.

Our work is operationally delivered through five interdependent pillars of activity. Each pillar aspires to support, value, and enhance the early years sector in Wales and each pillar is of equal value.

Early Years Wales aims to provide confidence to our members and our funders by being an organisation that is long-established, robustly governed, and provides a high-quality, supportive environment for our staff. We are focused on delivering value for money.



Sustainable, quality childcare businesses, charities, and parent-led groups



A qualified, valued, and skilled workforce at all levels (including volunteers and volunteer managers)



Support for parents of children in the early years; support for parent-led groups (e.g., Parent and Toddler groups)



Promoting a positive start for all children through their early years (0-5)



Advocacy for the providers and users of early childhood education and care

Achievements and Performance

1 Sustainable, quality childcare businesses, charities, and parent-led groups



What we did

In 2024 / 2025 Early Years Wales made membership free using invested reserves to cover the costs for our members.

Supporting Our Members Through Challenging Times

In response to the ongoing cost-of-living crisis and continued static funding for government-funded childcare places, Early Years Wales made the decision to offer free membership for 2024/2025. This move recognised the financial pressures our members faced—particularly acute in spring 2024—and aimed to ease the financial burden on early years settings.

Thanks to generous support from the Moondance Foundation, who match-funded our investment with **£25,060**, we were able to provide this support at a crucial time.

We're proud to have ended the year with **1,924** unique members—stronger and more connected than ever.

Early Years Wales Small Grant

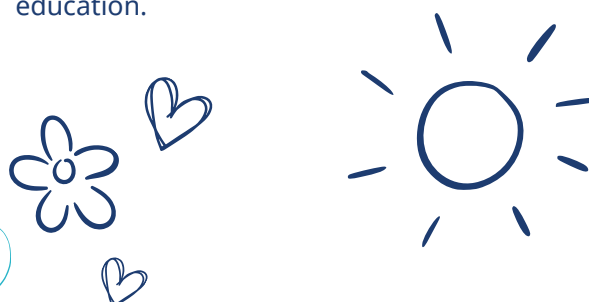
Supporting Members in Crisis Fund

Our small grants fund provided vital support to settings facing financial challenges that threatened their sustainability or growth plans. Through strategic partnerships with The Moondance Foundation and charitable funds from member settings transitioning ownership, we secured dedicated funding for our 2024-25 small grants programme.

Impact at a Glance

- **£18,015 in total funding allocated across the programme**
- **38 members received targeted financial support to maintain and develop their services**
- **8 counties benefited from grant distribution, ensuring widespread geographical reach**
- **86% success rate with 38 successful applications supporting members in need**

This fund represents our commitment to ensuring that financial barriers don't prevent quality early years provision from reaching the children and families who need it most. The support enabled settings to navigate challenging circumstances while maintaining their focus on delivering excellent care and education.





Early Years Wales is grateful to all organisations working in partnership with us to support the childcare sector.

Early Years Wales Partnership Opportunities

Through strong partnerships, we delivered meaningful opportunities that directly supported our members' needs.

LEGO® Education Build Me “Emotions” sets

The LEGO Group, Early Years Alliance, The Royal Foundation Centre, Early Years Scotland, Early Years Wales and Early Years in Northern Ireland for Early Childhood joined forces to distribute LEGO® Education sets to early years providers across the country.

Edina Trust – Little Explorer Kits

Free Outdoor Investigation Kit for Charitable/Voluntary Settings

Other partnerships included:

● TTS

● Boogiemites

● Redwing HR

● Den Early Years

● Townergate Insurance

● Booktrust Cymru

Early Years Wales Charity Governance Support

The governance project supported **420** members in all areas of governance during 2024/25.

Supporting small, charity-run childcare members in Wales is achieved through various avenues including funding, business support, and volunteer engagement. All 'not-for-profit' members are identified and added to the governance database, we check their legal status matches their Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW), Companies House, and Charity Commission registration.

“It has been really lovely working with you this year, your work is invaluable in supporting us, thank you for all your support and kindness.

Charity Commission

“WOW I didn't expect you to do all this for us, this is brilliant, I didn't know where to start, I will share it with our accountant, thanks.

Responsible Individual (Head Teacher/Charity Chair)

Working in Partnership with Moondance Foundation for a Better Early Years Sector in Wales

Expanding Access and Growing Membership

In 2024/25, Early Years Wales proudly offered free membership to childminders and voluntary managed providers, made possible by a generous £25,060 grant from the Moondance Foundation. This vital support enabled us to remove financial barriers and strengthen our network during a challenging year for the sector.

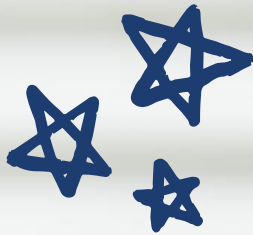
The impact was transformative. By the end of 2025, we achieved significant membership growth across both sectors. Childminder membership **increased by 3%**, reaching a total of **285** members. Voluntary managed providers experienced even more remarkable growth, with membership **rising by 14%** to reach **277** members.

This growth reflects both the genuine value our support provides and the continued trust placed in our work across Wales. The partnership with Moondance Foundation has been instrumental in making quality professional support accessible to all, regardless of financial circumstances.




~~~~~  
"Many thanks for all your help, bit of a mess really, don't know what we would do without you at the end of the phone, my stress levels are through the roof, but you are so kind and helpful it makes me feel so much better, there is a light at the end of the tunnel."

**Trustee/Chair**







## Early Years Wales Quality Assurance Scheme



Our quality assurance work to support excellent practice in the sector has continued in 2024/ 2025. Responding to feedback, we have improved the process to support timely completion and professional support throughout the process.

### Initial

- 42 purchased
- 8 completed (achieved)

### Reaccreditation

- 3 purchased
- 1 achieved

“The QFA has improved a lot, and the process is not overly daunting as it provides an opportunity for the staff team to work together, reflect and consider all aspects of our practice. Excellent opportunity to support Managers and Leaders who are new to their roles with their personal development of understanding the importance of quality standards in the Early Years Sector.

“As someone completing the QFA for the first time it was conducted professionally and everyone I have been in contact with has been very welcoming and helpful with any queries I may have.

## Further member services included:

### Monthly E-Bulletin:

Updates on policy, training, and exclusive opportunities.

### smalltalk Magazine:

A termly publication covering key sector themes (e.g., sustainability, movement and nutrition).

### Bespoke Training & Policy Support:

Leadership guidance, including training on Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan implementation.

### Essential Policy Packs:

Resources for voluntary providers, including finance templates, GDPR compliance guides, and governance toolkits.

### The introduction of a new periodical publication - The Business Bulletin in March 2024:

The first edition was titled Payroll and People. This periodical was created to support early years businesses with the ever-changing challenges they face, either sector-specific or broader changes that affect all businesses.







A qualified, valued, and skilled workforce at all levels  
(including volunteers and volunteer managers)



## What we did

**We provided 75 training opportunities, plus 8 Lunch and Learn sessions across 3 terms during 2024/25 with 750 attendees.** Our training planners outline the availability of training across the diversity of our member interests and are updated each quarter. The offers we provide include helping with leadership and management, practice and pedagogy, and updating policies and procedures.

## Foundation Learning



### Curious about the Curriculum

The Foundation Learning programme has continued to offer essential support for those working with the curriculum for non-maintained nursery settings. Sessions offered through the Curious about the Curriculum series aim to explore some of the common misunderstandings and miscommunications, as well as inform practitioners of updates and answer questions. Feedback has been positive, with participants appreciating the structure, informality and accessibility of the sessions.

### Active Child

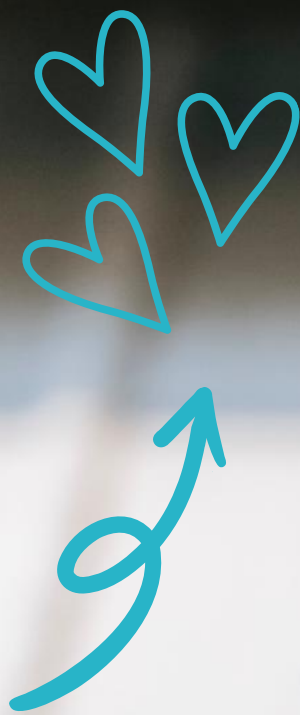
As part of our Foundation Learning offer, we delivered Active Child training to early years practitioners and reception teachers across Swansea, Powys, and Caerphilly. This face-to-face training supports those working with 3–5-year-olds to better understand how physical development underpins all areas of learning. The course explores movement schemas, motor progression, and playful environments, helping practitioners to confidently embed active, purposeful movement into everyday curriculum delivery.

### Self-Directed Play and Neurodiversity in Early Childhood

In January 2025, we delivered Self-Directed Play and Neurodiversity in Early Childhood, led by early childhood and neurodiversity specialist Kerry Murphy. The session challenged the myth that neurodivergent and/or disabled children need to be taught how to play in a specific way. Through a neurodiversity-affirming lens, practitioners explored the value of self-directed play, diverse play patterns, and the importance of liberating play from developmental expectations.

### A Whole-Body Approach to Learning in the Early Years

In June 2024, as part of our Foundation Learning programme, we ran an event titled “A Whole-Body Approach to Learning in the Early Years.” This full-day training, hosted at Court Colman Manor, brought together early years practitioners to explore how engaging children’s senses, movement, and environment can support development across all key learning areas. A highlight of the day was a keynote presentation by consultant and author Sally Goddard-Blythe, who shared her expertise on physical development and its vital connection to learning. Participants also took part in practical, hands-on sessions and had the opportunity to network, reflect, and share innovative strategies for supporting holistic learning in early years settings.



“ I have really enjoyed this course and got a lot from this.

“ Great day. Amazing training. Really helpful and informative.

“ It was very informative and reassured me that I am providing the best practice for supporting the children on my caseload through play.

“ Very interesting course that I feel will help our setting going forward.

“ Thank you for coming to our setting and training so many of our staff, it means as a whole PS1 unit all staff are on the same page and have an understanding of the importance of movement and how it helps children's learning further up the school.



## Welsh Safeguarding

All safeguarding courses have been updated to align with the new categories outlined in the National Minimum Standards (NMS). There has been a notable increase in attendance, particularly among frontline staff, reflecting a growing commitment to safeguarding practices. Evaluation feedback indicates a marked improvement in staff confidence when addressing safeguarding concerns, demonstrating the positive impact of the revised training approach.

- 2 Creating a Safeguarding Culture sessions delivered
- 2 Safeguarding B courses delivered
- 2 Safeguarding C courses delivered
- 93 attendees



I feel more connected and informed



## Lunch and Learn sessions

As part of our commitment to accessible, relevant, and time-efficient professional development, we have introduced a series of Lunch and Learn sessions designed to provide bite-sized learning opportunities for early years practitioners.

These informal, focused sessions are delivered virtually and scheduled over lunchtime, making them convenient to attend without disrupting the working day. Each session lasts no more than 30 minutes and covers a specific theme or area of practice, often aligned with current sector priorities or feedback from practitioners.

Topics included:

- Quality for All (May 2024)
- Child Safety (June 2024)
- Food and Nutrition (July 2024)
- Lockdown Policy (September 2024)
- Well-being Coaching (October 2024)
- Social Care Wales Offer (November 2024)
- Forest Schools (January 2025)
- Little Magic Train (March 2025)

### Networking sessions

Several internal networking sessions were also facilitated to encourage collaboration, knowledge sharing and professional development. Including Breakfast Bulletins and Leader & Manager Networks.



## Movement Champion

#Movement  
Champion

Movement Champion training has empowered staff to promote active lifestyles within their settings and broader communities. Champions are equipped with knowledge around physical activity, motivational techniques, and inclusive approaches to movement. In February 2025 we delivered our Active Child (online) course to **18 settings / individuals** who have signed up to be Movement Champions.



A lovely energetic course, lovely to share ideas across a wide platform of different settings.



Course was brilliant, great to share ideas with other practitioners. The content and delivery of the course was great. Would love to do a face-to-face so we could do more singing and exercising together.

## Asynchronous & Well-being Training

The asynchronous format of learning has to date provided **23 staff teams / professionals** with flexible learning options. Modules cover Active Baby and Active Toddler, each designed to be completed in under 95 minutes.



Following completion, learners complete a 10-minute online assessment. A pass mark of 80% grants full access to related resources and a certificate of completion.

Additionally, **three well-being** coaching sessions were delivered to support Early Years leadership through Den Early Years.



## Additional training offers

In addition to our core programmes, we have designed and delivered a suite of additional training offers that directly support the sector, shaped by insights gathered through a Training Needs Analysis (TNA).

These were delivered in partnership with sector specialists and experts, including:

- Toileting Together – Primary Steps
- Risk Taking in Play – Play Wales
- Introduction to Childcare – Early Years Wales & Social Care Wales
- Diverse Pathways of Development – Kerry Murphy
- Y Cylch Cymraeg – Matt Anthony, Early Years Wales
- Centering Play in Inclusion – Dr Sharon Colillies

Training was full of information.  
Diolch yn fawr

**Y Cylch Cymraeg**

The session was well presented, and I really enjoyed listening to Kerry Murphy. With so much information covered during the session, I did feel mentally exhausted at the end (which is a compliment!). I do need to re-read my notes and go back through the slides to help embed the information.

**Diverse Pathways of Development in Early Childhood**

It was made clear how important it is to get to know the child and understand what works best for them, how everyone is different, and we must observe and reflect.

**Diverse Pathways of Development in Early Childhood**



## Showcasing our external partnerships in delivery

At the heart of our evolving delivery approach lies a strong commitment to working in genuine collaboration with external partners to amplify impact and extend our reach. Over the past year, our work with external organisations has been pivotal in shaping and delivering high-quality, relevant offers that support practitioners working across the early years sector.



“Thoroughly enjoyed the course, the tutor was lovely and shared lots of information with us on how to incorporate the content of the course in our setting, she also brought lots of resources with her for us to look at.”

## Shifting from a non-racist to an anti-racist training approach

One key area of development has been our Shifting from a non-racist to an anti-racist training approach. This two-part training has been intentionally designed and led in-house, with input from expert voices and external partners committed to racial equity. Our focus has been on equipping early years practitioners with the practical tools, reflective spaces, and language needed to actively work towards becoming anti racist in their settings. The content is informed by lived experience, current research, and sector-wide best practice.

“Really good training, very useful & the trainer made me feel at ease & was happy to answer questions & talk through scenarios.”

We have been commissioned and delivered Shifting from a non-racist to anti-racist approach training to the following Local Authorities:

- Merthyr Tydfil
- Cardiff
- Neath Port Talbot
- Flintshire



## Active Movement Offers

We have continued to strengthen our Active Movement Offers, a suite of resources and training opportunities developed to encourage physical literacy and healthy habits from the earliest stages of childhood. Developed in house, these offers have been further enhanced by a partnership with Den Early Years who specialises in babies. This collaboration has enabled us to tailor delivery methods, refine content, and scale reach across Wales.







Our delivery to external partners and Local authorities continues to be underpinned by shared values, mutual learning, and a focus on long-term impact for children and families. As we look ahead, we remain committed to deepening these partnerships and our offers of training.

More on this on page 26.





## Camau Work Welsh - Supporting Confidence, Consistency, and Culture in the Early Years Workforce

Supporting the early years workforce to develop their Welsh language skills remains a central strand of our work. Through the Camau Work Welsh programme, we continue to offer structured, accessible, and bespoke sector-specific learning opportunities that help the workforce make a meaningful contribution to Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers.

### Strong Engagement and Growing Confidence

Engagement with Camau this year has been particularly strong at Entry level, with **205 practitioners** enrolling and **113 completing** the programme. This impressive uptake highlights a growing appetite for Welsh among early years professionals and a positive shift in attitudes toward using the language, even among those with no prior experience.

Participants frequently reported increased confidence and a genuine sense of achievement in using Welsh in everyday situations with children, families, and colleagues.

“I used to worry about saying anything in case I got it wrong. Now I try a little every day and the children are learning with me!”



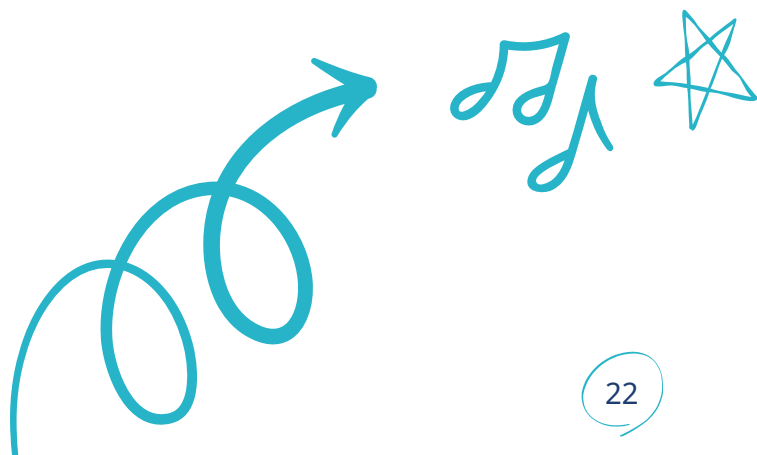
### Progression Through the Levels

**Foundation level:** 21 learners registered with 11 completing the programme.

**Intermediate level:** 4 practitioners enrolled and 2 completed.

While smaller in scale, these figures are significant—they demonstrate that learners are not only building foundational Welsh skills but are actively choosing to progress and deepen their competence.

“I’m now able to lead short sessions fully in Welsh. I never thought I’d get to that point. The training has really changed what I thought was possible.”





## Comprehensive Ongoing Support

“ Having someone visit our setting after the course made a big difference. We could see how to bring the Welsh into our actual day-to-day.

“ It's reassuring to know there's more I can do after the course. I'm not left to figure it out alone.

[Click here to read how Camau has transformed the practice of one of our members settings.](#)

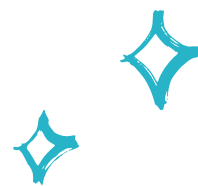
The success of Camau lies not only in the quality of the training, but in the ongoing support that helps practitioners embed their learning into practice. Through a blend of face-to-face, digital, and resource-based support, we created a sustainable, supportive, and responsive pathway for Welsh language development.

Support was provided through:

- Face-to-Face Follow-Up Sessions
- Email-Based Support and Celebrations
- Microsoft Teams Check-ins and Drop-In Sessions
- Access to Bilingual Resources
- Signposting and Progression Pathways



## Welsh Language Development through Cynllun Plethu



**Cynllun Plethu has continued to play a vital role in supporting early years settings across Wales to strengthen their Welsh language provision. Working closely with three participating settings at varying stages of their bilingual journey, the project has helped foster environments where the Welsh language is both seen and heard, embedded meaningfully into daily routines, and celebrated as part of children's identity and sense of place. All three settings have transformed their use of Welsh and are moving towards providing Welsh language immersion.**

Each setting continues to receive tailored support through a combination of structured training, hands-on mentoring, and goal-focused action planning. All settings engaged with the Camau Work Welsh training programme, with staff supported to complete modules appropriate to their level, from entry to intermediate.

Learning was reinforced through training support sessions, delivered termly on-site or online, dependant on the learners needs. These sessions equipped staff with the confidence to use Welsh in authentic, child-led contexts such as greetings, transitions, storytelling, and song.

Parents were engaged through bilingual newsletters, song sheets, and cultural events, helping extend Welsh language exposure into the home environment. Children across all settings responded positively, often repeating key phrases and demonstrating enthusiasm for Welsh songs, stories, and routines.

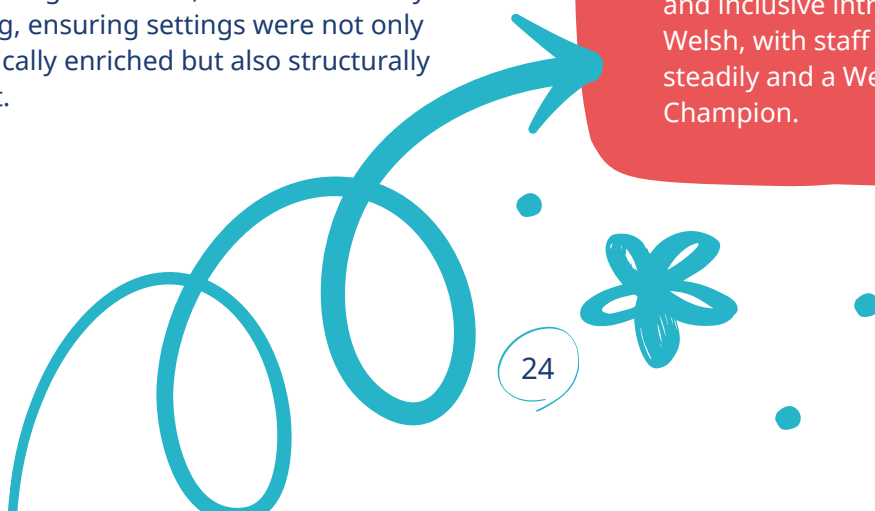
In addition to language-focused support, strategic business guidance was provided where needed. This included policy development, committee governance, and sustainability planning, ensuring settings were not only linguistically enriched but also structurally resilient.

15 face-to-face development visits were made across the three settings, which supported:

- Real-time modelling of bilingual practice
- Reflective coaching and observation feedback
- Assistance with Welsh Promise action planning
- Joint creation of bilingual displays and visual prompts

Each setting made measurable progress:

- One setting achieved both Bronze and Silver Welsh Promise awards, with a clear whole-setting commitment to bilingualism.
- Another deepened the use of incidental Welsh, engaged confidently with parents bilingually, and demonstrated readiness to expand provision.
- The third, embraced a supportive and inclusive introduction to Welsh, with staff building skills steadily and a Welsh Language Champion.





## Conclusion

Cynllun Plethu has proven to be more than just a language initiative; it is a capacity-building framework that supports professional growth, strengthens setting culture, and enriches children's early experiences with the Welsh language. The progress of the three participating settings reflects the impact of sustained, responsive, and collaborative support.





Support for parents of children in the early years; support for parent-led groups (e.g., Parent and Toddler groups)

## What we did

### Our work with Sport RCT | Project Overview:

Sport RCT commissioned Early Years Wales to deliver the First 1000 Days Delivery Partnership, focusing on the development and rollout of Active Baby services across the Rhondda Cynon Taff area. This programme forms part of a broader strategy to embed movement and physical activity into the critical early stages of a child's development – starting from birth.

The first 1000 days of life (from conception to age two) are now widely recognised as a foundational period for long-term physical, emotional, and cognitive wellbeing. This commissioned work aims to build awareness of this important child development among parents, carers, and early years professionals, using movement as a key intervention tool.

#### Project Title: First 1000 Days Delivery Partnership – Active Baby Services

Under a formal Service Level Agreement (SLA), Early Years Wales has been commissioned by Sport RCT to lead the delivery and rollout of Active Baby services across the Rhondda Cynon Taff Valleys.

This initiative forms part of the broader First 1000 Days Delivery Partnership, which focuses on the critical importance of early movement and physical development from birth to age two.

#### Activity

Delivery of the messaging has commenced through a network of trained facilitators who have completed the full training pathway: Active Baby, Active Toddler, and the two-day Active Baby at Home programme. This approach is now being embedded within local community areas and nursery settings, ensuring consistent messaging reaches families across all parts of the community. The facilitators are delivering sessions that offer practical, hands-on support to parents and carers. They also promote understanding of how early movement supports both physical and cognitive development in babies.

#### Aims of the partnership

- To engage parents and carers in promoting movement from birth.
- To raise awareness of the importance of physical development in babies during the first 1000 days.
- To support families with tools and guidance that encourage healthy early movement habits at home.



## Monitoring and Support

Early Years Wales is actively monitoring delivery quality to ensure consistency and meaningful impact across all sessions. All participating families receive bespoke Active Baby Packs, designed to:

- Reinforce key messages delivered during sessions.
- Provide simple, engaging activities for families to use at home.
- Encourage continuity of movement-based play in everyday routines.

## Active Baby at Home – Train the Trainer Model

In addition to direct delivery, we have continued to deliver the Active Baby at Home – Train the Trainer model to extend our reach across Wales.

Areas currently engaged in the Active Baby at Home Train the Trainer model:

- Swansea
- Bridgend
- Merthyr
- Rhondda Cynon Taff

This model empowers local professionals to deliver consistent Active Baby messaging and support independently, with resources and guidance from Early Years Wales.



# New Development: Growing Movers 6-week programme

We have also developed and initiated delivery of the Growing Movers programme, further expanding our early years support offer. This strand focuses on holistic early development and complements the Active Baby at Home work by promoting cognitive and emotional growth alongside physical movement for 8 – 15-month-old babies.

This is currently being rolled out to families in Rhondda Cynon Taff with support from local settings.



## Physical Literacy courses

- 39 practitioners attended Active Baby training in Rhondda Cynon Taff
- 32 practitioners attended Active Toddler training in Rhondda Cynon Taff
- 45 practitioners across Swansea, Merthyr Tydfil, Bridgend and Rhondda Cynon Taff who are now trained to deliver Active baby at Home

“Absolutely fantastic course. Really enjoyable and very interesting. Looking forward to delivering sessions for families.

“Everyone who is pregnant, has a child, works with children should have this training, it is vital and could make such a huge difference!





## Step into Welsh at St Fagans; Songs, Stories and Movement

From September to March, we delivered **Step into Welsh** in collaboration with St Fagans National Museum of History, introducing young families to Welsh through playful, developmentally appropriate sessions. With **55 families** participating across baby (6 weeks-12 months) and toddler (12+ months) sessions, the programme seamlessly integrated language learning with physical development.

Each session was carefully designed to reflect developmental needs. Baby sessions used gentle movements and rhythmic language, incorporating Welsh phrases like 'Codi! Codi!' during lifting motions. Toddler sessions included dynamic storytelling where children followed Welsh commands such as 'Dewch yma' while jumping or clapping, supporting both language acquisition and gross motor development.

The programme's innovative approach connected movement with language retention - activities focused on crossing the midline, hand-eye coordination, and sensory integration, all while embedding Welsh naturally into physical play. Stories were matched to developmental from simple visual storytelling for babies to interactive narratives where toddlers acted out Welsh words and sounds.

Parent feedback highlighted the programme's accessibility and impact: **"Fantastic free Welsh movement sessions in a great setting"** and **"Very relaxed... Really enjoyed. Diolch."**

Families gained confidence using Welsh in everyday situations while understanding the powerful connection between movement and language development.

**This collaboration with St Fagans exemplifies our commitment to making Welsh language learning inclusive, engaging, and developmentally sound - creating positive early experiences that support lifelong bilingualism.**





Which colour is this?  
Pa lliw yw hwn?



## Cydweith Cymraeg - Building Family Confidence in Welsh

**The Cydweith Cymraeg programme engaged over 60 families across Wales through interactive bilingual sessions that brought children and parents together to learn Welsh side by side. Delivered in community playgroups, nurseries, and parent-toddler groups, the programme focused on building confidence in everyday Welsh through shared songs, stories, and activities.**

Families joined with varied starting points—some with little to no Welsh, others preparing for Welsh-medium education. The programme's strength lay in its gentle, low-pressure approach that created safe spaces where Welsh could be heard, repeated, and enjoyed naturally.

The impact was immediate and lasting. Parents reported using Welsh at home—greeting with "Bore da," singing bilingual songs, and understanding vocabulary their children brought home. Children as young as six months responded enthusiastically, with families surprised by how quickly children engaged when Welsh was introduced through play.

**Where is the  
red car?**  
Ble mae'r  
car coch?

**Here it is!**  
Dyma fe!



Crucially, the impact extended beyond the sessions. In Monmouthshire, children began using Welsh spontaneously in play, prompting parents to seek home resources. Several families started exploring additional Welsh learning opportunities, inspired by their children's progress. Cydweith Cymraeg demonstrates that when Welsh is introduced through shared parent-child experiences, it becomes part of family life—a living language with foundations that grow well beyond the early years.



I could only count to three in Welsh at the start. Now we're counting to 99 at home!

**Dad**





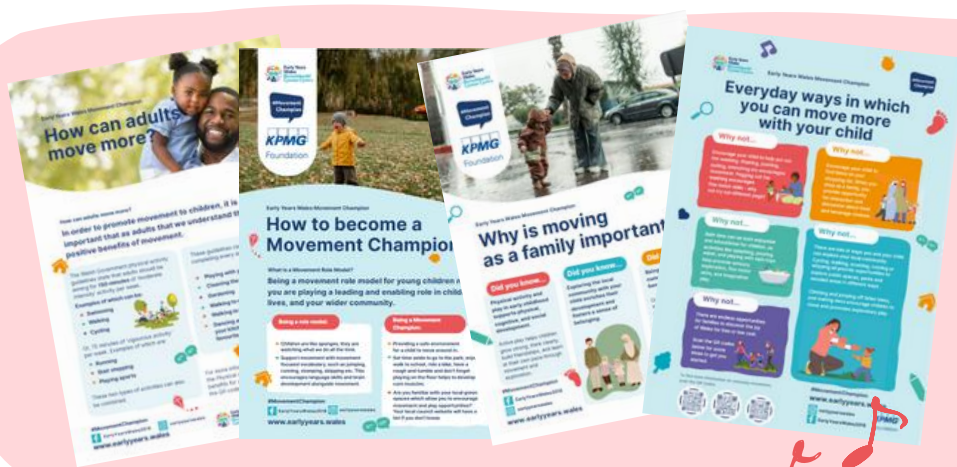
# Promoting a positive start for all children through their early years (0-5)

## What we did

### Movement Champion Campaign

Our Movement Champion Campaign raises awareness of the importance of movement in the development of cognitive skills and physical abilities of young children. As of April 2025, the campaign had a total of 48 signups from all corners of Wales. These included entire childcare settings, childminders, Members of the Senedd and third sector organisations.

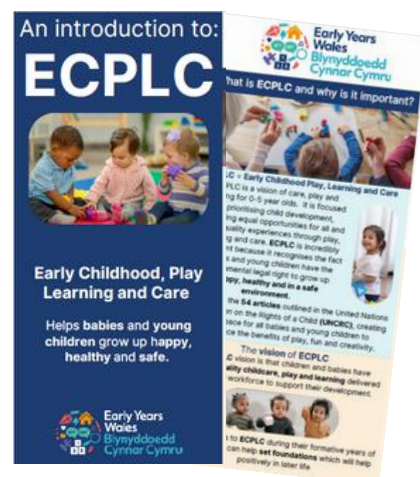
#Movement  
Champion



The campaign has a catch all theme, encouraging settings, childminders, individuals and organisations to sign up, receiving assets to help them promote and report on how they are implementing the campaign for the purposes of receiving a certificate.

## ECPLC Leaflet

Early Years Wales collaborated with the Welsh Government to produce an easy-read leaflet about **Early Childhood, Play Learning and Care (ECPLC)** policy which is adopted by the Welsh Government and implemented in settings across Wales. The purpose of the leaflet is to help parents and carers understand what ECPLC is, why it is important, and how the early years sector is incorporating it into their practice to support their child. A second benefit of this leaflet is raising awareness with parents about the vital work the early years sector is doing to support the physical and cognitive development of children, enhancing the sectors value in the eyes of parents.





## Championing the Early Years Through Policy and Advocacy

As a non-political charity, Early Years Wales values the opportunity to contribute to Cross Party Groups (CPGs) convened by Members of the Senedd. In 2024/2025, we actively participated in **eight** CPGs focused on children and poverty, working alongside a broad range of stakeholders to support informed scrutiny of Welsh Government policies and initiatives.

Our Head of Policy and Advocacy played a key role in shaping these discussions—providing evidence and data that supported Senedd Members in their statements on childcare and the early years during plenary sessions. Where appropriate, we also engaged directly with Welsh Government ministers, offering insight and raising sector-relevant concerns to help inform policy development affecting children and families across Wales.

Through these contributions, we continue to ensure the voices and experiences of our members are represented in national conversations.

## Policy updates and sector working group

Our Head of Policy and Advocacy hosts a regular **policy working group** designed to create space for members to feed directly into policy calls as well as resource development. These conversations inform our direct work with the Welsh Government in various meetings such as the National Minimum Standards reviews, Fair Work forums, and task and finish groups to ensure the voice of the sector is heard by civil servants.

## Partnership working with Public Health Wales

In Autumn 2024, Public Health Wales convened a working group of organisations from the early years, local authorities, third sector, health and wider stakeholders to consider the draft and publication of 'The Best Start in Life: An Early Years Framework for Action'. As this work is central to our strategic plan, Early Years Wales was delighted to contribute extensively to this document and are scheduled to speak at the launch event in summer 2025.





## Advocacy for the providers and users of early childhood education and care



### What we did

#### Mental Health Survey

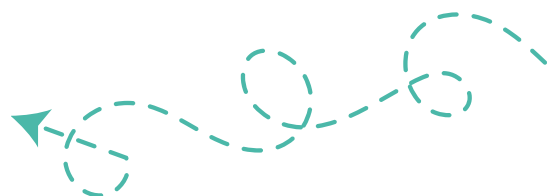
At the end of 2024 and the beginning of 2025, Early Years Wales released a survey designed to gather information about the levels of **mental health** amongst staff who work in the early years sector. The survey provided data which was the first of its kind in Wales, giving us an insight into the mental health of individuals at different levels of pay, responsibility and experience in the sector.

Results from the survey show that many people working across the early years sector in Wales experience negative mental health and well-being. They report that this is often caused by issues such as attitudes towards the sector, lack of value and pay, and uncertainty about the future of their livelihoods. This leads to feelings of immense frustration expressed by all, at different levels both within and outside of the sector. From more junior staff, it is expressed towards management, and higher-level staff, frustration is expressed at wider social factors. This fragility and mental instability felt throughout the sector suggests that it is not always a healthy place. The impact of low pay and being undervalued results in these feelings being felt sector wide.

#### The First 1,000 Days; A Right to Childhood

In October, our CEO spoke on an invited panel at the Cross-Party Group for Children and Families event, 'The First 1,000 Days; A Right to Childhood.'

Talking on a panel including, Dr Liz Gregory (Parent and Infant Foundation), Clare Law (Blackpool Better Start), and Chaired by John Griffiths MS, our CEO talked about the fragmented funding for the early years sector, and how this adds complexity to the system for providers and parents. In a short presentation, the key message to Ministers was to use the policy levers in place to address the system challenges and enhance the profile and working conditions for the sector by investing early and focusing on preventive measures over later intervention programmes.



# Our future plans

Updating and enhancing our **membership offer** as we reinstate charges – working with partners, and through updating our products and services, members renewing and paying for membership for the first time since 2019 will see an organisation committed to system improvements and providing value for money.

Developing our **portfolio of training and learning opportunities** – the early years sector runs on tight budgets. Our commitment is to provide excellent professional development opportunities that enhance practice and leadership at all levels.

Reinstating our **regional roadshows** – the post-Covid world is different, and our previously hosted regional forums are managed through different technological approaches. However, the time is right to return to visiting members in their regions. We are restarting this in 2025 with a view to embedding these regional practice-sharing events in our calendar.

Finalising our **3-year project with Arts Council of Wales** on Creative Learning in the Early Years – The Creative Learning in the Early Years project has been a joyful exploration of collaborating with artists in the early years' settings around Wales. 2025/26 brings this three-year project to a conclusion. We would hope to continue this work beyond (subject to funding), however, aim to ensure that the key learning, case studies and practice are shared widely within the sector and beyond.

Revitalising our **Annual Conference**, making this accessible to all members – we have an exciting conference planned for 2025, with excellent speakers. We are providing this to our members free of charge. We hope to see a large online audience to share reflections about the practice of childcare and early years.

Continuing our **Movement Champion Campaign** – with supportive funding being secured from the KPMG Foundation, Early Years Wales will catalyse the movement champion campaign, advance the production of supportive resources and capture evidence of the impact of movement on children's development.

Launching our **manifesto** for the early years to help the conversation about improving the system in Wales – heading into the elections in 2026, Wales is at a crossroads. We have the basis of a proactive and targeted programme of childcare to support families. We will launch our manifesto to share our vision of what steps the incoming government could take to enhance the sector for children, families and for the workforce.

**Modernising our systems** – in 2025/2026 Early Years Wales are;

- Launching a new website
- Investing in WhatsApp messaging to enhance our communications with the members
- Investing in AI to enhance our responsiveness and productivity, and
- Enhancing our ability to offer asynchronous learning through a range of mediums



# Finance Review



## Incoming Resources

Incoming resources for the year ended 31 March 2025 were £901,804 (2024: £979,367). Income from charitable activities was £872,761 and has decreased from £935,630 in 2024.

## Resources Expended

Resources expended during the years ended 31 March 2025 were £994,126 (2024: £1,191,939).

## Results

Net outgoing resources for the year were £130,845 (2024: £116,649). Before investment losses of £38,523 (2024: £95,923 gain), an unrestricted deficit of £83,215 was generated (2024: deficit £196,124) and a £9,107 restricted deficit generated (2024: £16,448 deficit).

## Cash Flow

Cash flow remains strong, holding £313,833 (2024: £212,481) in cash.

## Principal Risks and Activity

The principal risk identified by the Trustees is our reliance on short-term funding. We continue to seek to mitigate this by widening our training offer and moving towards strategies that can diversify income sources. We have updated our Memorandums and Articles of Association to support this strategic aim.

## Cyber Security

We work to the best-practice principles of Cyber Essentials. All data is stored and accessible only through an encrypted gateway. All equipment is monitored on a 6-monthly basis. All data is backed up routinely and two unique copies are held to prevent data loss.

## Investment Powers and Policy

The Trustees, having regard to the liquidity requirements have a policy of keeping cash balances as low as possible and any surplus invested in other accounts. Market volatility has affected the invested reserves, and having set a deficit budget, we have used funding from our reserves to support our aims and objectives. The dividend we receive from the invested reserves is used as unrestricted income. This has fallen slightly in-line with the depreciation of overall capital in this account. Our Investment Policy statement is reviewed annually by the Board.

## Reserves Policy

We have utilised some of our reserves over the last year to provide free membership for our members, and to supplement income to continue what we believe to be essential services.

The Charity receives external funding in the form of grants and contracts to support its very important activities in the furtherance of charitable objectives. Such funding sources are subject to chance and cannot be guaranteed. In addition, the Charity undertakes project-driven work for which restricted income is received.

The Trustees consider 12-months running costs sufficient to safeguard a loss of funding. The use of invested reserves has contributed to:

- Central Support membership services
- Governance support and advice
- Training and development services
- Welsh translation services
- Free membership for members.

At the reporting dates, the investment was £1,050,613 (2024: £1,170,595) representing unrestricted funds less tangible assets and restricted amounts. The remaining funds are held with an aspiration to achieve income that the Charity can spend on its aims.

## Structure, governance and management

### Governing Document

Early Years Wales is a charity limited by guarantee and is governed by memorandum and articles dated 12<sup>th</sup> July 2018.

### Directors and Trustees

The directors of the charitable company (the Charity) are its Trustees, for the purposes of charity law and throughout this report they are collectively referred to as the Trustees.

### Appointment of Trustees

As set out in the articles of association, The Chair and Treasurer are elected by the Trustees. The Company Secretary is appointed by the Trustees. The Trustees are recruited using a variety of methods ranging from general advertisements, direct approach where specific skills or experiences are sought, and referrals. Trustees are appointed for a period of four years and can be reappointed for a further four years before stepping down for at least 12 months. Trustees are a blend of Early Years Wales members and volunteers with skills and experience from professional and personal experience. Co-opted Trustees may be appointed.

### Trustee Induction and Training

Trustees are inducted into Early Years Wales by the CEO and Chair. There is bespoke and generic Trustee training available.

### Organisation

The Board of Trustees, which can have up to 20 members, administers the Charity and sets the overall mission, direction, and strategies of Early Years Wales. It scrutinises performance to secure effective implementation of strategy as well as approving budgets and monitoring membership and the risk assessment register.



Details of implementation and execution are the responsibility of the management team led by the Chief Executive Officer. This ensures that:

- The organisation stays focused on its mission and strategy
- Key strategic and policy decisions are made by the board, and
- Support and constructive challenge are given by the Trustees to the management team and CEO.

The Board meets four-times a year. The Finance Committee meets four times a year between Board meetings.

## Related Parties

There was one related party transactions relating to the financial year 2024/25 (2023/24: nil). Jaziea Farag, provided professional services to the Charity whilst on the Board amounting to £1,966.

All interests are required to be declared and signed in the Trustee Declaration of Interest proforma as required under Early Years Wales' code of governance. A conflict-of-interest register is kept and updated annually, or when appropriate. In addition, all Trustees are asked to declare any interest pertinent to the agenda at all Board meetings.

## Key Personal

David Goodger – CEO

Lisa McMullen – Head of Finance and Contracts

Moya Williams – Head of Member Services and LA Contracts

Julie Powell – Head of Training, Learning, and Development

Leo Holmes – Head of Policy and Advocacy

The key management personnel received remuneration totalling £214,272 (2024: £320,655).

The key management personnel of the Charity has reduced from 8 in the prior year to 5 in the current year as a result of the Charity restructure.

## Pay Policy for Staff

Salaries for all staff are approved by the Board and are set at market rate. Early Years Wales is a Real Living Wage employer. The Charities policy is to give full and fair consideration to applications for employment made by people identifying protected characteristics including disability, and minority ethnic backgrounds. Disabled employees received appropriate training to promote their career development within the Charity. Employees are kept well informed about the progress and position of the Charity by regular internal meetings.

## Risk Management

Early Years Wales considers itself to be a risk intelligent organisation, taking appropriate managed risks in an increasingly challenging environment. Our risk register and risk management procedures are fully embedded within the organisation. The risk register is updated and reviewed by Trustees in Board and Finance meetings.

Reference and administrative details

|                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Charity Name:         | Early Years Wales 2018 T/A Early Years Wales                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Charity number:       | 1056381                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Company number:       | 3164233                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Registered address:   | Unit 9, Centre Court, Treforest Industrial Estate. CF37 5YR                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Trustees:             | Natalie McDonald – (appointed 26.09.24)<br>David Dallimore (Chair)<br>Tanwen Grover – (appointed 26.09.24)<br>Jocelyn Elmer – (appointed 01.02.24)<br>Clare Murphy – (appointed 01.02.24)<br>Kathryn Leighfield<br>Jamie Powell (Treasurer)<br>Lisa Owen<br>Carolyn Asante (resigned 12.02.25)<br>Jaziea Farag<br>Emily Dace (appointed 01.02.24 – resigned 18.11.24)<br>Gabby Meredith (resigned 05.02.25) |
| Secretary:            | David Goodger (CEO)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Auditors:             | Bevan Buckland                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Bankers:              | Barclays Bank, 51, Hope Street, Wrexham. LL11 1BE.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Investment providers: | CCLA, Senator House, 85, Queen Victoria Street, London. EC4V 4ET                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

Auditor

In accordance with the company’s articles a resolution proposing that Bevan Buckland be reappointed as auditor of the company will be put at a Board meeting.

Disclosure of information to auditor

Each of the Trustees has confirmed that there is no information they are aware of which is relevant to the audit, but of which the auditor is unaware. They have further confirmed that they have taken appropriate steps to identify such relevant information and establish that the auditor is aware of such information.

The Trustees report was approved by the Board of Trustees

.....  
David Dallimore  
Chair

Dated: .....



The Trustees, who are also the directors of Early Years Wales 2018 for the purposes of company law, are responsible for preparing the Trustees Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company Law required the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure of the charitable company for that year.

In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently
- Observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent, and
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Charity will continue in operation.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for the assets of the Charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The Trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the Charity and financial information included on the Charity's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.







EarlyYearsWales2018



earlyyears-wales

[www.earlyyears.wales](http://www.earlyyears.wales)

[www.blynyddoeddcynnar.cymru](http://www.blynyddoeddcynnar.cymru)



earlywales



Early Years Wales



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government



Early Years  
Wales  
Blynyddoedd  
Cynnar Cymru