

Edinburgh Private Nurseries Could Close Over “Error-Ridden” Funding Figure

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Private nurseries across Edinburgh could be pressured into permanent closures after the new hourly rate set per child is "error-ridden".

A new hourly funding rate of £6.02 per child has been agreed by Edinburgh City Council's [education committee](#), following a meeting on Tuesday 20th September - an increase of 61p.

[National Day Nurseries Association](#) (NDNA), which represents private nurseries across Edinburgh, is arguing that the new rate should be at least £6.47 - which would make the increase at least 44p short.

Speaking at the meeting, the chairperson of NDNA, Sandy Towers, said that the new rate

"doesn't represent fairness for each child or equality".

NDNA has also accused Edinburgh City Council of favouring their own state institutions over privately run pre-schools when it comes to awarding finance to nurseries.



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Children under the age of 5 in Scotland are entitled to receive [1,140 hours](#) of yearly early learning and childcare (ELC) funding, which is to be provided by a combination of local authority nurseries and private providers paid by the council.

The hourly funding rate per child has risen by 2.1% in the past 5 years, whilst inflation has increased by 29% across private, voluntary and independent sectors.

Mr Towers says: "Local authority nurseries are obviously receiving a much higher hourly rate.

"The consequence of this is that it enables Edinburgh Council to pay staff around 30% more than the private sector can afford, and this is creating massive pressure on nurseries in both recruiting and retaining staff."

There have been talks of the worry of closures potentially causing a significant shortage of nursery spaces available for preschool children across the city.

This has raised concerns regarding the impact that this could have on the learning and development of young children.

Christina Dyson, who works in [Kidzcare](#) in Norwood, says: "Early learning for young children is so important.

"Already we have seen that those who missed out on their nursery years during the Covid pandemic are significantly behind where they would be expected to be in terms of recognising numbers or knowing the alphabet.

"I think as far as funding goes, the main concern for the running of private nurseries at the moment is staffing because we are severely understaffed.

"It would be good to see the council put some money into the recruitment of nursery workers,

particularly in the private sector."