



Wales Parents Face Soaring Bills: A Heavy Financial Burden

Description

High Childcare Costs in Wales: A Growing Concern for Families

Families across Wales are feeling the financial strain of childcare expenses, particularly for children under two, which are reportedly more than double the average costs in England, according to Oxfam Cymru. The lack of government support for parents with children in this age group adds to the burden, as they miss out on the 15 hours of free weekly childcare offered to parents in England for children aged between nine months and two years.

The children's charity Coram emphasizes that nursery fees for under-tuos in Wales now surpass those in any other region of Great Britain. In Wales, the cost of a part-time nursery slot for an under-two tops £155 weekly, while in England it falls to £70 when funded hours are considered. This disparity is keeping many parents from returning to work, as highlighted by Lydia Hodges, head of Coram Family and Childcare, who stated that these expenses are untenable for many families.

Among those affected is Katie Bromley, a mother of three, who feels compelled to remain at home due to escalating childcare costs. She expressed that, without adequate support, re-entering the workforce seems out of reach. Similarly, Ffion Ryan, another mother, echoed these concerns, advocating for financial assistance that coincides with the end of maternity pay at nine months.

As the 2026 Senedd elections approach, childcare costs are expected to become a pivotal issue. Political parties are proposing various plans to enhance childcare support, with some calling for an extension of free childcare to all children from nine months, aiming to alleviate the financial pressures that many families currently endure in Wales.

Vocabulary List:

1. **Disparity** /dɪ'spærɪti/ (noun): A great difference.
2. **Burden** /'bɜːrdən/ (noun): A load especially a heavy one.
3. **Compelled** /kəm'peld/ (verb): Forced or obliged to do something.
4. **Tenable** /'tenəbl/ (adjective): Able to be maintained or defended against attack or objection.
5. **Alleviate** /ə'liːviət/ (verb): Make (suffering deficiency or a problem) less severe.
6. **Advocating** /'ædvəʊkeɪtɪŋ/ (verb): Publicly recommend or support.

Comprehension Questions



Multiple Choice

1. According to Oxfam Cymru, how much higher are childcare costs for children under two in Wales compared to England?
 - Option: More than double
 - Option: Equal
 - Option: 1.5 times higher
 - Option: Half the cost

2. What is the significant factor contributing to the financial burden on parents of under-twos in Wales?
 - Option: Government support
 - Option: High nursery fees
 - Option: Parental income
 - Option: Education standards

3. According to Coram, where do nursery fees for under-twos in Wales rank compared to other regions in Great Britain?
 - Option: Highest
 - Option: Lowest
 - Option: Middle
 - Option: Not mentioned

4. What is the stated weekly cost of a part-time nursery slot for an under-two in Wales?
 - Option: £155
 - Option: £70
 - Option: £100
 - Option: £200

5. Why are many parents in Wales unable to return to work according to Lydia Hodges of Coram Family and Childcare?
 - Option: Job availability
 - Option: Lack of qualifications
 - Option: High childcare expenses
 - Option: Transportation issues

6. What is a proposed solution by some political parties to alleviate childcare costs in Wales?
 - Option: Free childcare for all children above two
 - Option: Extend free childcare to children from nine months



- Option: Increase nursery fees
- Option: Reduce government support

True-False

7. The lack of government support for parents with children under two in Wales is not a significant issue.
8. Katie Bromley, a mother of three, is considering returning to work despite escalating childcare costs.
9. Lydia Hodges believes that high childcare expenses are manageable for most families in Wales.
10. Ffion Ryan does not advocate for financial assistance coinciding with the end of maternity pay.
11. Childcare costs are not expected to be an important issue in the upcoming 2026 Senedd elections.
12. All political parties are proposing plans to enhance childcare support in Wales.

Answer

Multiple Choice: 1. More than double 2. Government support 3. Highest 4. £155 5. High childcare expenses 6. Extend free childcare to children from nine months

True-False: 7. False 8. False 9. False 10. False 11. False 12. True

Vocabulary quizzes

Multiple Choice (Select the Correct answer for each question.)

1. What is a tax on imported or exported goods called?
 - Option: Disparity
 - Option: Financial
 - Option: Tariff
 - Option: Revitalizing
2. What is the term for publicly supporting or recommending a particular cause or policy?



- Option: Advocating
- Option: Infrastructure
- Option: Optimistic
- Option: Mitigate

3. What are measures taken to protect or secure something?

- Option: Safeguards
- Option: Burden
- Option: Compelled
- Option: Insulated

Gap-Fill (Fill in the blanks with the correct word from the vocabulary list.)

4. The government announced a plan aimed at _____ the country's economy.

5. Small businesses may qualify for a tax _____ based on their annual revenue.

Matching Sentences (Match each definition to the correct word from the vocabulary list.)

6. Companies that produce goods in factories or plants.
7. Protected from outside influences or disruptions.

Answer

Multiple Choice: 1. Tariff 2. Advocating 3. Safeguards

Gap-Fill: 4. Revitalizing 5. Exemption

Matching sentence: 1. Manufacturers 2. Insulated

CATEGORY

- 1. Business - LEVEL4

Date Created

2025/04/15

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