

House of Commons Nursery Annual report 2013/14

Introduction

1. This report covers the period April 2013 to March 2014. It will be submitted to the House of Commons Commission, Finance and Services Committee and the Administration Committee.

Governance

2. The Nursery Governance Committee (NGC) is made up of the following:
 - Rt Hon. John Bercow MP, Speaker of the House of Commons (Chair)
 - John Borley, Director General, Facilities
 - Anne Foster, Head of Diversity and Inclusion (Secretariat)
 - Chris Leslie MP
 - Mary Macleod MP
 - Andrew Walker, Director General, HR and Change

Costs & charges

3. Costs for this financial year and last have been as follows:

	2012/2013 (£)	2013/2014 (£)
Income	179,900	265,790
Payroll	23,745	–
Other costs	49,580	44,108
 Contract Admin	 207,126	 253,848
Net running cost	100,551	32,166

4. Nursery charges remain unchanged.

Standard Fees for LEYF House of Commons Nursery

<u>Under Twos</u>	
Days per Week	Monthly Fees
2 Days	£ 585.00
3 Days	£ 877.50
4 Days	£ 1,170.00
5 Days*	£ 1,278.33
*includes 5-Day Discount of £184.67pcm	

<u>Over Twos</u>	
Days per Week	Monthly Fees
2 Days	£ 520.00
3 Days	£ 780.00
4 Days	£ 1,040.00
5 Days**	£ 1,170.00
** includes 5-Day Discount of £130.00pcm	

Evenings (All ages)	Monday	6:00 pm to 10:30 pm	£ 49.50
	Tuesday	6:00 pm to 10:30 pm	£ 49.50
	Wednesday	6:00 pm to 7:30 pm	£ 16.50
	Thursday	6:00 pm to 6:30 pm	£ 5.50
	Friday	<i>(no evening provision)</i>	

Usage

5. Usage increased over the reporting period. At the end of the financial year March 2014, 34 children were using the Nursery. The Nursery has a capacity to care for up to 40 children. 17 of these were under two years old; 17 were over two years old. At the end of the financial year the Nursery had occupancy of 58% of available sessions.
6. Occupancy levels for 2010–2014 are set out in Annex 1.
7. The largest user groups are Members' staff and House of Commons staff, closely followed by MPs and civil servants. Annex 2 sets out the usage of different eligible groups. The most sessions booked are on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays, in line with the sitting patterns of the House. During the recesses there is a reduction in Members' children attending the Nursery as the House is not sitting.
8. The staffing levels of the Nursery are managed by the number of children present in order to ensure that the staff-to-child ratios are met. Currently, there are nine members of full time staff at the nursery.
9. In January 2014, eligibility was extended to the children of Civil Service employees who hold a minimum of CTC-level security clearance. This has resulted in an increase in places booked from three Civil Service children in March 2013 to 7 Civil Service children in March 2014.

Improvements to services

10. In September 2013 the Nursery Governance Committee approved measures suggested by an operational review to further improve numbers:
 - a) Extension of the eligibility to grandchildren of Members, Members' staff or staff of the House: the eligibility criteria for these extended groups have been signed off;
 - b) Provision of car parking passes while their child is enrolled in the nursery: this has been agreed in principle by the Serjeant At Arms on a case by case basis;
 - c) Flexibility of the availability of the Nursery (for example, to cover shift patterns): this work is being taken forward in the next quarter;
 - d) Extending advertising and communications, prioritising the creation of a nursery web page to be available on the parliamentary external website: this is due to go live in August 2014;
 - e) Better use of the technology available to enhance the parent-child contact while the child is attending the nursery: the terms of reference for a feasibility study is being drafted for consideration by the NGC;

- f) Sanctioning an investigation of the level of fees which the Nursery could charge in future, based on a sliding scale depending on pay range: this will be taken forward in the financial year 2014/15.
- 11. The Nursery contract with LEYF was extended for two years until August 2016. A full tender process will begin in the autumn of 2015.
- 12. The Department of Facilities improved the catering arrangements by changing the service provision to a dedicated chef. This has enabled a closer working relationship with staff and children, a more varied range of healthy meals to be provided, smaller portion sizes which encourage the children to finish their meals, and cooking/baking sessions with the children which have been well received.
- 13. This year the Nursery has held a number of engagement events. These are listed in Annex 3.

Outlook

- 14. Nine more children are expected to join by the end of this calendar year. This year's projected breakdown by user group is provided at Annex 2.
- 15. The timing of the break-even on running costs depends on both the increase of children joining the Nursery and the number of sessions booked across the week. The arrival of a greater proportion of children of contractors and Whitehall staff is helping to spread the usage more evenly across the week. As a result, income exceeded operating expenditure in March 2014. Break-even on operating costs is expected to be achieved during this financial year (2014/15).
- 16. The Nursery is preparing for the likelihood of an OFSTED visit during this financial year. This visit can happen at any time and the Nursery is not informed prior to the inspection, of which the contractors are aware.
- 17. Plans are being developed for operating during the General Election period in April/May 2015. It is expected that fewer children may be using the Nursery during this time.

Conclusion

- 18. Since the beginning of the last financial year there have been lots of changes to the Nursery. Usage has increased from 22 to 36 children and continues to increase. Eligibility has been opened up to include children of Whitehall staff.
- 19. The interim occupancy target set out in the original business case was 40%. The nursery first reached this target in August 2013. The closing occupancy rate in March 2014 was 58%.

Jo Mills

Diversity & Inclusion Programme Manager/Nursery Liaison Officer

July 2014

Annex 1 – Take-up for 2010 – 2014: Key data

Months	No of children attending	Under 2s	Over 2s
Sep - 10	4	4	0
Oct - 10	6	6	0
Nov - 10	7	6	1
Dec - 10	7	6	1
Jan - 11	11	9	2
Feb - 11	13	10	3
Mar - 11	13	10	3
Apr - 11	13	9	4
May - 11	14	10	4
Jun - 11	15	11	4
Jul - 11	17	12	5
Aug - 11	15	10	5
Sep - 11	14	9	5
Oct - 11	15	8	7
Nov - 11	16	7	9
Dec - 11	15	6	9
Jan - 12	14	6	8
Feb - 12	14	6	8
Mar - 12	16	7	9
Apr - 12	21	10	11
May - 12	21	10	11
Jun - 12	19	9	10
Jul-12	18	8	10
Aug - 12	18	8	10
Sep - 12	16	8	8
Oct - 12	16	8	8
Nov - 12	17	9	8
Dec - 12	17	9	8
Jan - 13	22	12	10
Feb-13	22	12	10
Mar-13	22	12	10
Apr-13	24	14	10
May-13	22	13	9
Jun-13	23	12	11
Jul-13	22	12	10
Aug-13	22	12	10
Sep-13	24	13	11
Oct-13	24	13	11
Nov-13	23	10	13
Dec-13	25	11	14
Jan-14	30	15	15
Feb-14	33	16	17
Mar-14	34	17	17

Annex 2 – User group breakdown and forecast

Breakdown of user groups children currently attending the Nursery: March 2014

User Groups	No. of Children
MPs	7
MP Staff	9
HoC Staff	9
PICT	0
Peers	0
HoL	2
Whitehall	7
Press Gallery	0
TOTALS	34

Forecast breakdown of eligible user groups' children expected to attend by October 2014

User Groups	Aug-14	Sep-14	Oct-14	Total
MPs				0
MP Staff		1		1
HoC Staff	1		3	4
PICT				0
Peers				0
HoL				0
Whitehall	1		3	4
Press Gallery				0
TOTALS	2	1	6	9

Annex 3 – List of events and activities

29 May 2013	Nursery Picnic with children, staff and parents
12 June 2013	'Stay and play' session with the parents
20 June 2013	Nursery Open Evening
13 August 2013	Saints and Stories session at Westminster Abbey
13 October 2013	Story telling session with Rev. Rose Hudson-Wilkin
27 October 2013	Visit to the Crypt with Rev. Rose Hudson-Wilkin
5 November 2013	'Messy morning' with parents and their children
10 December 2013	Nursery children's Christmas party
11 December 2013	Makaton speech and language session
18 December 2013	Nursery staff and parents open evening
16 January 2014	Baking workshop with parents and children
14 February 2014	Chinese New Year: children's trip to Soho
22 February 2014	Trip with the children to the Tate museum
26 February 2014	Sensory workshop for children and parents
7 March 2014	Nursery Open Evening
11 March 2014	Early Years talk for parents and other eligible users
26 March 2014	Easter bonnet parade