

# Online Business Support Resources

The COVID-19 lockdown has had a severe impact on the early years and childcare sector, with many settings now facing cash-flow crisis as well as changing demand for their services. Continuing to operate as they did in February 2020 may no longer be an option.

Reviewing how your business is operating, may help to identify what could be developed or changed to meet changing demand, build occupancy and generate income. It will also help to identify what continues to work well, that should remain, and where there may be new or revived opportunities. Is there something you have identified that you want to or feel you need to change?

This is the starting point to review how the business operates now, how you could operate in the future, and how you move forward from now.

This signposting document provides sources of information, advice and tools to build your knowledge and confidence before completing a business model review. These have been selected by the Essex Early Years Business Management Consultants. There are other sources of information and support available, these are just a sample.

## **NDNA Early Years Business Zone**

The Business Zone website has a range of tools to support you in reviewing your business. These are free to access, download and use and aimed mainly at group settings such as pre-schools and day nurseries.

The Business Appraisal Toolkit will ask a series of in-depth questions, divided in to 12 categories, to analyse the business strengths and weaknesses, then make recommendations and set actions. Each category may require some additional work, research or analysis, which is designed to help you better understand your business currently, and how to move forwards.

The Financial Management toolkit is a downloadable workbook, that you can populate with your financial information on your accounts, budgets, staffing and income. This will produce a detailed financial report which will help to identify areas for attention, where and how cost savings could be made, making accurate forecasts. these will support you to make decisions to support your business's sustainability

[https://www.earlyyearsbusinesszone.org.uk/business-toolkits/?utm\\_source=NDNA&utm\\_medium=ndnawebpage&utm\\_campaign=eybzndnapage](https://www.earlyyearsbusinesszone.org.uk/business-toolkits/?utm_source=NDNA&utm_medium=ndnawebpage&utm_campaign=eybzndnapage)

As a membership organisation, and publisher, there is the option to purchase books, toolkits, online learning and support packages that may support your business with sector specific advice.

## **PACEY Business Smart**

Business Smart is a collection of information documents, tools and templates to support business model review and planning which are free to read, download and use. Topics covered include business planning, marketing and finance.

Originally developed for Childminders, the collection has grown to support childminders, those who operate childcare on domestic premises, as well as those on non-domestic premises.

<https://www.pacey.org.uk/business/>

Within the business planning section there are downloadable templates such as business health check, business plan, risk assessments, SWOT analysis with a

<https://www.pacey.org.uk/working-in-childcare/business-smart/business-planning/>

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### **Early Years Alliance Business and Management support**

Early Years Alliance (trading name of the Pre-School Learning Alliance) has information and resources to support pre-schools and day nurseries. There is information and support specifically for charitably run settings.

<https://www.eyalliance.org.uk/business-and-management>

The Cost of Delivery Calculator is a free, downloadable spreadsheet that will calculate the cost of delivering your business at an hourly rate, using your own financial, staffing and occupancy information. To support this, there is a 'Calculating childcare costs' template document to complete first that calculates the total costs of the business and the hours delivered.

<https://www.eyalliance.org.uk/cost-delivery-calculator>

As a membership organisation, and publisher, there is the option to purchase books, toolkits, online learning and support packages that may support your business with sector specific advice.

### **Essex Early Years and Childcare Business Management**

Developed by the Essex Early Years Business Management Consultants, there is a range of information, support and advice available online produced specifically for early years and childcare businesses. Currently, this information is all free to access and intended for potential, new and existing early years and childcare providers.

There are template documents to support your business, which are downloadable, and can be customised for your own use. these documents will also be appropriate to use to support any application you make to Essex County Council for early years capital funding. There is a Business Plan bespoke for Essex providers a Cashflow planning spreadsheet and a marketing plan template

<https://eycp.essex.gov.uk/running-your-business/managing-your-business/>

The online resources and information are intended to guide and support settings, with bespoke advice available from the Business Management Consultants Team through telephone, email and video conferencing.

## **Essex County Council Support for Business**

Working in partnership with the Let's Do Business Group, support is available to any Essex based business, offering up to 12 hours of fully funded (i.e. free) advice. The range of business support services includes, but is not limited to:

- business planning and marketing
- providing connections to key personnel, prospective business partners and support organisations
- identifying potential sources of business funding
- building local supply chains
- recruiting and training a high-quality workforce
- accessing university knowledge and research and development expertise
- evaluating and selecting an ideal business location, property or site.

<https://www.essex.gov.uk/support-for-businesses>

## **Best Business Growth Hub**

The South East Business Hub can offer your business support and advice, whether you're just starting out or growing an already established company.

South East Business Hub is provided by the [South East Local Enterprise Partnership \(LEP\)](#) – the business-led, public/private body established to drive economic growth across Essex, Southend and Thurrock.

The South East LEP area provides the gateway to the world, working hard with partners, businesses, communities and government to drive productivity and economic growth with key strands of activity including skills provision and business growth support.

The key focus for the LEP has been to develop a strategy that will secure investment in the South East working with local, regional and national partners to deliver impactful projects that secure a better future for communities in the East of England.

<https://southeastbusiness.org.uk/essex-southend-thurrock/>

There are many support documents available to the Early Years and Childcare Sector, including the Business Management Consultant team who can offer bespoke information, advice and support. Currently you can book telephone or video meetings, as well as receive email support.