



Nursery Closure Campaigning Toolkit

What is this toolkit for?

At Pregnant Then Screwed, we're on a mission to end the motherhood penalty and fight for a fairer, brighter future for all parents.

Right now, the childcare sector is on life support, with nurseries closing left, right, and center. And who's left to pick up the pieces? Families like yours.

We know it's overwhelming, but you're not powerless. This toolkit is your campaign-in-a-box: everything you need to rally, organise, and push back against closures in your area.

Let's stand together, build a stronger voice, and show them that parents won't sit back and let essential support be taken away.

What kind of childcare provider are you trying to save?

There are three main types of childcare provider

- Nurseries run or maintained by local councils, and those attached to public sector employers like the NHS
- Privately-owned nurseries
- Childminders

This toolkit is designed to be your go-to for saving council-run nurseries and those connected to public sector employers. Campaigning to protect these settings often means tackling budget cuts made by local councils rather than private business decisions.

If you're here because a private nursery near you is closing, we feel for you—this is happening more and more due to government funding for 'free hours' schemes not matching up with the cost of delivering them. While it's tough to challenge private closures at the local level, this guide includes tips for raising awareness about childcare shortages in your area.

We also strongly encourage you to get involved with Pregnant Then Screwed's surveys and campaigns—together, we're calling on the government to properly fund childcare schemes and build a sustainable future for the sector.

Getting started

First things first: you need to find out *why* the nursery is being closed. More often than not, it boils down to underfunding, making it impossible to cover costs, or a staffing crisis that leaves them unable to meet legal requirements.

So speak to the staff and other parents, request a meeting with the manager or a call with the nursery owner to get to the bottom of what's driving this closure. Once you have a good idea of the root causes you'll be ready to chart the course for your campaign.

Build your community! Here's how:

- Rally the parents – Start chatting with other parents at pick-up and drop-off, or gather phone numbers to set up a WhatsApp group where you can easily share updates and organize.
- Loop in the nursery staff – Staff may not be able to openly join the campaign, but if they're in a union, it might be a powerful ally. Unions can bring the pressure you need and offer guidance.
- Get social and go local – Spread the word on local Facebook groups, playgroups, sports clubs, and anywhere parents gather. The more support, the louder your voice.
- Tap into talent – Identify parents with handy skills (legal, union knowledge, communication experience) and pull in anyone in your network who can help.
- Seek out supportive organisations – Unions, local resident associations, and groups like the Post Pandemic Childcare Coalition are full of helpful resources, advice, and support.
- Consider legal support – Whether it's a parent with legal expertise, connections, legal aid (if eligible), or even a crowdfunder, having legal know-how on your side can be invaluable.
- Bring in the press – Reach out to local media. Coverage can build public support and put pressure on decision-makers.

Social media

- Start dedicated accounts for your campaign on Facebook, Instagram and X (formerly Twitter). Find people that are in your campaign network (for example, other parents/volunteers) that have communications or social media experience to make posts and monitor comments and DMs.
- When posting on social media, ensure you tag relevant organisations, politicians and decision makers in your posts.
- Find other childcare closure campaigners and connect with them. This will help with moral support and also ensures you can learn from each other's campaigns. At the time of writing, there is a live campaign to save a nursery in Hackney.
- Make sure to promote any updates, crowdfunders, petitions, demonstrations, etc you have organised on social media and encourage your followers to share your posts.

Crowdfunders

- If your nursery is closing due to an interim lack of funds and a specific down payment would help plug the gap, then you may want to consider setting up a crowdfunder.
- A crowdfunder might also be a great option if you need help in raising funds for legal costs.
- Another great reason for setting up a crowdfunder is to help cover your costs for running the campaign (for example, for printing flyers, posters and banners).

Tips for running a successful crowdfunder

- Link your social media to your crowdfunder so that people who donate can follow your progress and be invested in your campaign. It could lead to more donations in the future and more shares of your posts by people sympathetic to your campaign.
- Include pictures and videos in your crowdfunder to tell the story of your campaign. This will humanise your campaign and create more buy-in from potential donors and supporters.
- Be transparent when setting up your crowdfunder and in your social media posts about where the money will be spent.
- Make sure to ask your campaign network, family and friends to all share your crowdfunder far and wide.

Get political! Engage your local representatives

- Find the right councillor. Check your council's website for a list of councillors, and aim to meet with council leaders or heads of the Education Committee. Your local county councillor can also be a powerful ally; just enter your postcode at writetothem.com
 - Wales: Meet with your Member of the Senedd. To find yours, enter your postcode at theyworkforyou.com or use the Welsh Parliament's [Find a Member tool](#).
 - Scotland: Meet with your MSP. Find them by entering your postcode at theyworkforyou.com or the [ScottishParliament site](#).
 - Northern Ireland: Meet with your Assembly member. Locate yours by entering your postcode at theyworkforyou.com
- Prepare for your meetings – When you meet with your representative, emphasise how this closure will hurt families in their community. Bring hard facts: the number of parents affected financially, how many children face disruption, the lack of other childcare spaces, and waiting list times elsewhere. Case studies or personal stories make a strong impact.
- Be clear about what you're asking for – Know exactly what action you hope the councillor will take and ask them directly to support your cause.
- Gather petition signatures – A petition shows local support, so start one and share it widely.

Your MP is the person who represents your interests in Westminster, regardless of which region you are from. It is important that you try engage both your local representatives as detailed above and your MP. Find out more below

- Find your local MP – Use writetothem.com or mysociety.org to locate your MP.
- Prepare your case – Just like with councillors, present your case clearly, with facts and figures to back up the impact of this closure on their constituents. Include specific case studies they can use in parliament when talking about this issue and share details on how your petition is doing.
- Stay in touch – Keep the conversation going after your meeting. Follow up regularly with your MPs office to ensure they remain engaged.
- Ask for help – MPs can offer advice, contacts, or other forms of support, so don't hesitate to ask them for anything that might help your campaign.

Demonstrations

- If you are planning on marching as part of your demonstration, you will have to notify the police at least six days before and they can impose restrictions to your plans. If your demonstration is stationary, you do not need to notify the police, but must be mindful of public safety and ensure the demonstration is peaceful. You can find the legalities surrounding demonstrations and marches [here](#).
- Find a day that is suitable for most people's availability, to ensure a strong turnout. Think about day, time and if there could be a clash with any other key events or dates.
- Find a place that is strategically strong for the protest, whether that be outside of the childcare setting itself or somewhere that has a busy footfall to ensure more people see your demonstration taking place/ can be recruited to join your cause or sign a petition. Entering private property without permission is not permitted, so ensure you gain any necessary permissions for your chosen location.
- If possible, enlist Unions or an experienced campaigner, such as the Post Pandemic Childcare Coalition, to help with the organisation and promotion.
- Promote the demonstration on social media in as many local groups as possible and have a physical presence locally through flyers and posters in local shops etc. Lean on the contacts you have built up so far to ensure all interested parties are made aware of the date, time, location and any other key information.
- Having a key speaker is a strong way to attract a larger audience/ and more press coverage. A local MP or a key figure in the community could be good choices if they are sympathetic to your campaign.
- Prepare a press release to ensure you garner press attention and coverage. Start with a clear and engaging headline that focuses on your campaign. Remember to date your release and add your location. Using concise language, explain your campaign and its context and the plan for your demonstration. Use quotes and case studies to show the harm that will be caused to parents and children if the childcare setting closes. Include your contact details, so a journalist can follow up with you.
- It would be handy to contact the press at the start of your campaign to build a relationship. If you find a journalist sympathetic to your campaign, they will be more likely to write about your demonstration.
- Remember banners and signs are a key part of getting your message across, particularly in photos of the demonstration, so try to encourage your participants to make some, ensuring they remain on message. Providing supporters with the key phrases and messages from your campaign can help keep signage cohesive.

Final thoughts

We know campaigning can feel overwhelming, especially when you're juggling work and family. But remember, parents like you *have* made a difference before, and your efforts can, too. In 2022, parents successfully saved Hillingdon Nursery through their dedicated campaign. If you're looking for inspiration, [check out this blog post by Orest Bakhovski](#), one of the parents who led that fight—it's full of insights and encouragement.

Wishing you strength and success in your campaign. You're not alone in this fight!

With all our best,
The Pregnant Then Screwed Team