



Annual Report Summary 2021-2022

PATA is the largest voluntary sector provider of support to early years childcare and education in Gloucestershire.

PATA, originally Playgroup and Toddler Association, started many years ago when community playgroups first began to form. We evolved along with the sector, working collaboratively with many other early years and childcare charities.

Today, PATA (UK) remains one of only two of these original organisations and is now a charitable company run by, and for its members. The Board of Trustees is drawn from people with a variety of skills and knowledge from all parts of Gloucestershire.



Over the years baby and toddler groups were welcomed into PATA's membership and later the out of school sector as well as a number of private groups, children's centres and schools. With 169 current members, we are by far the largest voluntary sector organisation supporting early years and childcare settings in and around the county.

PATA now provides training, support and information to this range of settings, both within and outside of our membership, enabling them to offer high quality childcare, education and play opportunities.



Our Aims

To enhance the development, care and education of children primarily under statutory school age and also of children and young people of school age by encouraging parents to understand and provide for the needs of their children through community groups;

To encourage the formation of groups offering appropriate play, education and care facilities, together with the opportunity for parents to take responsibility for and to become involved in the activities of these groups, ensuring that such groups offer opportunities for all children and young people whatever their race, culture, religion, means or ability and offering continuing support, encouragement and help to these groups;

To encourage the study of the needs of such children and their families and promote public interest in the recognition of these needs.

PATA's Vision

Our main objectives for 2021-22 were:

- **To offer a range of accessible, responsive, information advice and guidance (IAG) services** to member settings, their staff, and volunteers by offering online resources and newsletters.
- **To deliver specialist support services and projects** that respond to the needs of settings working with children and young people which include specific services to PATA members and a payroll service.
- **To develop the PATA Managed Groups' (PMG)** infrastructure, administration, and team skillset to ensure their sustainability and provide the foundation for potential future acquisitions. PMGs are PATA's own Early Years settings/Preschools.
- **To provide high quality training and development opportunities** for those working or intending to work in the Children and Young People's sector, by running non accredited short courses and workshops.
- **To participate in partnerships and initiatives** that focus on enhancing support for early years providers and/or giving them a voice on issues and shared concerns. We will continue to work in partnership with Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) and other relevant Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations and take part in and encourage others to respond to research and consultations.
- **To undertake planned programmes of work that focus on PATA's own development and continuous improvement.** We will seek to develop our quality improvement programme and monitoring and evaluation framework.



The Trustees have paid due regard to guidance issued by the Charity Commission in deciding what activities the organisation should undertake.



Supporting the Development of Early Years and Childcare Settings



Support for Settings remains at the core of what PATA is and does. We are there for our members, on the end of the phone, or an email or a message on Facebook.

Our members know that they can trust our advice and that if we don't know straight away we will go away and find someone who does.



Monitoring the queries coming in helps us to shape our resources. We respond quickly, writing briefings and blogs on common topics and creating model documents that we know will meet a need.

169 members

received:

- info & guidance
- job advertising
- training subsidies
- a groups in need specialist support scheme &
- payroll service

PATA created:

19 briefings,

4 blogs & **317**

Facebook posts to ensure settings were kept informed and up to date, but not overwhelmed.

Our Support for Settings team is available by phone or email daily, with most enquiries being dealt with either immediately or in 24 hours.

29% related to Human Resources

25% Governance and financial concerns

We offered immediate support or signposting on topics including HR, legislation, governance and financial concerns.

We seek out ways to make groups more robust and sustainable for the future.

We are confident that our updated (2019) Group Constitution, is sufficient to meet the needs of most groups, without the need for costly structural changes.

"PATA is a fantastic organisation and so valuable to the early years sector in Gloucestershire and beyond."

In the last year our Vacancies service has advertised:

185 jobs for

81 settings

Our Fees & Wages Survey Report provided up to date information to allow settings to benchmark their fees, wages and other costs against similar local settings.

It's extremely useful for settings when considering wage or fee rises and as a sense check for their costs such as rent and utilities. Rolling in anonymised data from our Payroll team means that the wages information is based on a huge sample of Gloucestershire Early Years employees.



Over the summer we posted 30 days of activities on Facebook. Our 'Spectacular Summer' was seen by over 6000 people.

We had an average of **25,000** page views on the PATA website per quarter.

This year also saw a major revamp to the members' area.



We use our resources where we know they will make most impact.

Our Groups in Need Grant programme was re-launched offering Emergency, Development and Upskilling Grants to those settings most at need.



"I really appreciate this email and I can't believe how quickly PATA have responded. You are utterly brilliant."

Training & Development

PATA delivered training to individuals and Early Years Settings/Schools throughout the UK and also globally to countries including USA, Kenya, Finland, UAE, and Thailand.

Most of our courses continued to be delivered via **zoom** which has allowed us to both deliver training globally but also to use trainers from around the UK without the necessity for factoring in high travel and accommodation costs.



61 scheduled training courses run

1206 delegates attending, representing an 8% increase in delegate numbers on last year.

119 places on CPD training courses taken by PMG staff

and an additional
18 bespoke courses with
430 delegates attending

Average feedback score of

9.02 out of 10 across all courses

“So reassuring to go on a course that was proactive and thought provoking and make instant changes in practice”

We were pleased to work in collaboration with Odyssey Teaching School Hub Alliance to offer five low-cost research based programmes consisting of 14 CPD training courses to a broader audience within Gloucestershire schools and settings.



Continued partnership with 2nd Chance First Aid for Paediatric First Aid training and Facts4Life for health and wellbeing education.



We were approached by Flintshire Local Authority (Wales) to deliver bespoke Anna Ephgrave Planning in the Moment training to all their settings and childminders.

7 courses run

215 participants

9.1 out of 10 average feedback score

“This is definitely the best course I've ever attended, extremely useful. And it was delivered perfectly.”

Our in-house team continued to offer online network meetings for managers & senior staff from PATA member settings. This is an opportunity to ‘network’ and talk through issues with peers and experienced PATA staff.

Training survey launched to our members to help us to understand areas which they would like covered in the forthcoming year.

“It’s good to know that surveys are actually read and points taken on board.”

Partnership now developed with NoodleNow, enabling us to offer discounted access to all of our members and our own staff.



NOODLE NOW!™
use your noodle, train your mind

We continue to look to secure funding for further learning opportunities aiming to help learners to take the next step into volunteering or work in the childcare sector.

PATA Managed Groups (PMGs)

This academic year saw the most disruption in terms of full and partial closures of the settings since the initial Covid-19 lockdown due to staff, children and family illness and isolation requirements.



5 out of 6 settings had to fully close for a number of days during the year, with all settings seeing restrictions in children numbers at various times. There was a continued need to provide enhanced cleaning procedures and additional PPE for settings with no funding to support these additional costs.

We've launched individual websites for each of the settings.

These are linked to the main PATA website and their open and closed Facebook pages.



"Amazing and wonderful and caring teachers, my eldest daughter just finished there and she loved every minute of being there, and my other daughter is going back in September. I highly recommend this setting." (PENGUINS)

All PMG policies were reviewed over the summer period with updates made and Covid addenda either removed or where appropriate incorporated into the standard policy.

This work continues to enable the PATA office team to provide key support to all groups in our membership through working directly with PMG staff to identify and share best practice across the county and to lead by example.

*"Great playgroup. Lovely staff and a nice setting."
(SIDDINGTON & KEMBLE)*



Despite it being the first week in role for the new Manager, Funbusters achieved a Good rating in their OFSTED inspection.



Winchcombe were inspected towards the end of the year, when unfortunately the Manager was signed off. Two of the four areas were rated Good and there were many positive statements in the report.

"What an amazing setting to send your children to!! I'm so glad that I chose to send my daughter here. The management team are extremely helpful and nothing is ever a problem or too big an ask (ELMBRIDGE)

*"It's wonderful. My little girl is so happy here. The staff are fabulous and the outdoor space (which the children are in come rain or shine) is just brilliant."
(WINCHCOMBE)*

PATA Managed Groups evolved from community settings that were threatened with closure. PATA was able to step in, keep them open and help them to thrive.



We now support over 250 families across the 6 settings.

Staffing

We continue to work hard to improve our staff benefits offer, both to improve their personal circumstances, develop professional practice and help with staff retention.

This year we introduced:

- **New staff area of the PATA website** launched alongside our newly revised **Staff Handbook**
- **Enhanced holiday for long service** (one additional day's leave during term time after 2 and 4 years continuous service)
- **Christmas shopping afternoon** (one half day's paid leave)
- **Mid-year staff celebration payment** (for all those attending an event arranged for each setting/team)
- **Increased staff Christmas party payment**



Our temporary **Enhanced Covid-19 Sick Pay Package** continued until April, when requirements for isolation reduced.



The termly **Staff Newsletter** continues to enhance communication and we've improved our staff recognition with the **Outstanding Achievement Award**, giving at least one main prize each term, along with a number of smaller gifts. Everyone nominated by their colleagues receives a postcard to their home so they hear the good things their colleagues said about them.

Our Continuing Professional Development Training Bursary Fund continues to support training and development needs for all staff.

"Receiving a postcard with such lovely comments really made my day!"

As a further benefit PATA staff are also able to readily access PATA training courses and all have an online account with NoodleNow and Flick for self-directed learning.



This year...

- Two PMG staff members attained Level 3 qualifications.
- Two enrolled on apprenticeship programmes which we hope they will complete in the next year.
- A Head Office member of staff completed a qualification in Information, Advice and Guidance.



Need to talk?



A free 24/7 counselling helpline is available to all PATA employees (& their family members living with them) who need help and advice.

ARAG's qualified counsellors are able to provide telephone support on any matter that is causing upset or anxiety – from personal problems to bereavement.

0333 000 2082



All staff (and their families) have access to a free counselling service provided by Morton Michel. They were given wallet sized cards and details are also published in settings.

PATA Payroll



We now process on average 818 employees per month, an 11% increase on last year.



As well as our member clients receiving the PATA Support for Settings briefings, we produce supplementary payroll related briefings for all our clients. This was particularly important as there were significant changes to the way holiday entitlement is calculated for part-year workers, following a ruling by the Supreme Court. We were inundated with requests for support and guidance due to this ruling.

For many member settings where a sole administrator, treasurer or manager oversees the payroll side of their business, the support of the PATA Payroll team was vital.

“Just want to feedback how grateful I am for your very swift and professional help, it's a great help to be able to pick up the phone and get the really clear and helpful advice that you have given me today. Thank you”

"From all the many questions I have asked over the years, you have taught me so much and been an amazing support to me in my role in setting. You and all the team at PATA are amazing 😊"

“Thank you for the reports and for making payroll such a breeze for me this year!”

“Just want to say a big thank you for all your support throughout the year. You have come to my rescue several times this year, and your knowledge and advice is invaluable.”



Forging links and providing a voice for PATA members

PATA has worked with organisations and external partners to achieve the best for all our members.



We continued to employ a **GEM Navigator/Developer** to support participants to move into work, education or training.

A **Gold Award** in the Green Impact Scheme was awarded to us for our efforts in encouraging environmentally friendly behaviours amongst our staff and settings.

PATA have regular contact with Gloucestershire County Council (GCC), as well as other relevant VCS organisations across the county to provide information exchange on behalf of our members.

We use our knowledge and influence at **County level** to ensure the voice of the sector is heard and help member groups to feel less alone and more supported.



In conjunction with **Stroud College**, we ran a Level 1 accredited pre-employment programme, Introduction to Working with Children in Early Years Education course.

We continued to work closely with **Facts4Life**, promoting delivery of their health and wellbeing courses specifically for Early Years through our PMGs and member settings.

Members of **Child Friendly Gloucestershire** and **Best Start in Life Groups**

Working in partnership with the **Odyssey Teaching School Hub**

Member of **Early Years Initial Teacher Training Partnership Board**



Local MPs

We met with local MPs (Siobhan Baillie – Stroud and Geoffrey Clifton-Brown – Cotswolds) and took the opportunity to outline the difficulties facing the early years sector and in particular concerns over the debate about the relaxation of ratios, backed up by the results of a survey taken amongst our members.

We hope to build on these relationships in future.

Volunteer Involvement

PATA involves volunteers in administration, maintenance of the website, building maintenance, HR, marketing, and parent fundraising to support the PATA Managed Groups. Because of ongoing Covid-19 issues we have continued to limit the number of parent helpers and volunteers in the settings.

We have been able to offer some placements for students registered on Early Years qualifications and we hope to be able to open opportunities more widely again in the coming year.

Kickstart Gateway

We supported five member groups to each employ a young person under the Kickstart Scheme, providing a support worker to give advice and training.

PATA also employed six members of staff under the scheme.

Six young people successfully completed the Kickstart placement, with three of these then continuing their career with their Kickstart employer.

The remaining 3 participants continued to move towards further training or permanent employment within Early Years.



Financial Headlines

£1,066,835 income

71%	PMG funding and fees
10.5%	Training Income
6.5%	Payroll
6.5%	Kickstart Scheme
3%	Support for Settings
2.5%	GEM Project
0.5%	Other income

£992,206 expenditure

88%	Delivering charitable activities
9.5%	Support costs
2.5%	Governance and Depreciation

In the financial period 2021-22 PATA made a surplus of £74,629 (Financial year 2020-21: deficit of £36,371). At the end of the year the total fund was £454, 819. Of this £284,292 was held as general unrestricted funds, £122,838 held as designated funds, and £47,689 held as restricted funds. Surpluses are used to continue to support our membership and charitable aims.



PATA continues to source and apply for funding for specialist projects that support the development of early years and childcare settings.

As a partner of the Gloucestershire Going the Extra Mile (GEM) project we continue to receive funding to employ a GEM Navigator/Developer.

Local PMG fundraising reached a total of **£4,374** to put towards improvements to their own settings, including Sponsored Events, Raffles, Commission from Photo Shoots.

PATA @ Elmbridge Under Fives successfully applied for a grant of £10,000 from the Barnwood Trust which was for the development of a sensory cabin. This is being successfully used both for children with specific sensory needs and for the development of other children as well.



Significant PATA funding sources:

- GCC Nursery Education Funding (NEF)
- GEM Project
- Kickstart
- Odyssey Teaching School Hub
- Flintshire Local Authority
- Winchcombe Playgroup
- Barnwood Trust

PATA other income sources:

- PATA Managed Groups – Parent fees
- Payroll service fees (Split by member and non-member clients)
- Membership fees
- Individual training course fees
- Bespoke training course fees

Grants and contracts awarded as above have enabled PATA to succeed this year in its key objectives. PATA has employed staff, purchased consumables, occupied an office base and six PATA Managed Group setting buildings to carry out its aims and objectives.

What next...?

Enhancing our membership

We continue to look for ways to enhance our membership offer.



Renaming the Groups in Need Fund

We have identified that the name of this fund is a barrier to some settings who do meet the criteria for grants so will be renaming it the Group Support and Development Fund.

Support Officer visits

Funded by the Group Support and Development Fund we will offer all charitable settings one visit from a Support Officer per year for the next two to three years. This can be used as an audit session with a 'critical friend', a chance for staff to ask questions or an opportunity to share best practice.

Free access to network meetings

As part of our Support for Settings offer network meetings (for Managers, Deputies and Committee Members) will be offered free of charge.

New trainers

We continue to add to the breadth of high quality training that we offer. In the Autumn term we will host Pie Corbett (storytelling) and Pete Moorhouse (woodwork).

Updating our Support Tools

15 years ago we had a comprehensive Business Pack which was available to members and used by many settings as their 'bible'. This has been replaced over the years by factsheets on the website and other tools. We have identified that many smaller settings would really like a 'one-stop' folder of this information so we will pull together the relevant information, updating and adding where necessary. This will be available either through the website or as a physical folder to purchase. Linked to this will be policies and forms that we have developed for our own settings, available to purchase.

A (loud) voice for the sector

In what we know will be a difficult year ahead we will commit to continuing to build relationships (where possible) and to agitate (where necessary) to get the best for our members both on a local and national level.

Supporting our Staff

Communicating the support that we offer

We will continue to look for ways to support staff, including ensuring that they are fully aware of the Employee Assistance tools already available.

Mental Health First Aider

We will look to introduce this role across the organisation, providing a clear line of support outside of immediate management structures.



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