

Case Study: Cooperative Childcare – Little Pioneers

The Background:

The Cooperative Childcare run over 40 nurseries nationwide and in keeping with the values of the Cooperative Movement, constantly invests in the people working in it's nurseries to ensure they provide the best possible environment for children to grow and develop. They have recently become the first nursery group to achieved Millie's Mark across the board, meaning that all Practitioners in all 44 nurseries are fully trained in paediatric first aid.

The Co-operative Childcare is part of the Midcounties Co-operative which has various trading groups including food retail, healthcare, travel, funerals, post offices, energy, employee benefits and childcare.



The challenge:

Co-operative Childcare is a fast growing childcare provider, with its portfolio increasing from six nursery sites in 2004 to over 40 today. The nursery management software the organisation employed in its early days was quickly becoming unfit for purpose as the business grew.



Our existing nursery management software was throwing up increasing numbers of inaccuracies in reports and preventing us from looking at the business as a whole.

The system we were using did not allow us to look at reports globally, instead we had to dip in and out of each individual site to get the data we needed, which was becoming increasingly time-consuming as we added more sites to our portfolio.

We discovered that a lot of the data included in the reports we ran was inaccurate, so we were not working with the right figures for our current and future business planning. The system also prevented us from running many of the reports we wanted to.

**Holly Sawyers, Business Improvement
Manager**

The Solution:

Following an extensive tender process, Co-operative Childcare felt Connect Childcare's nursery management software provided them with the solution they needed to help their business continue to innovate and grow.

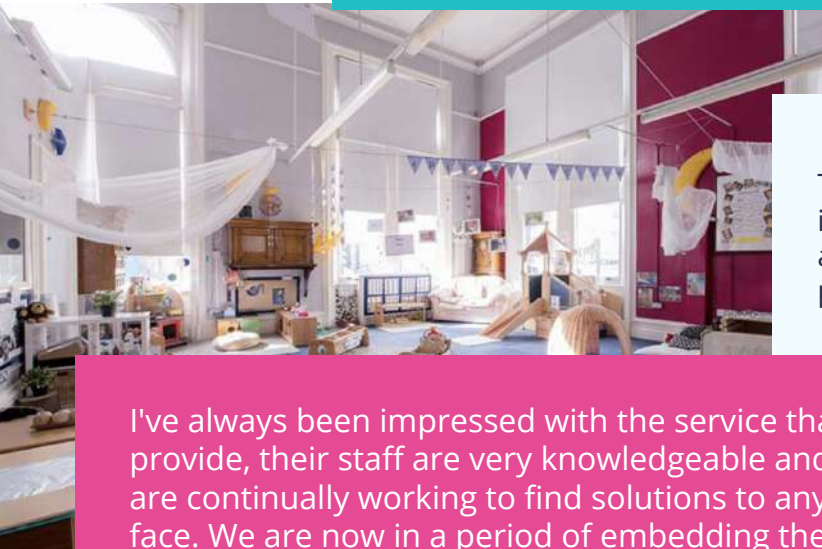


We were really impressed with the flexible nature of the Connect Childcare software and the added value it could provide us with. Features such as the communications module included in the software were a real selling point to us, even more so when we visited other nursery chains already using the software and saw first-hand how it was benefiting them.



The scale of our childcare business meant we wanted to include some bespoke features in our software package, so we undertook a six-month development period with the technical team at Connect Childcare, making sure we were happy with how the system would work for us before rolling it out to our individual sites.

During this period of project management, we were really impressed with the knowledge and understanding of the team at Connect Childcare, particularly the implementation team. All of our queries were promptly answered and the whole team were committed to getting the software exactly right for our needs.



The team at Cooperative Childcare first implemented Connect Childcare back in 2015 but are continually impressed by the solutions provided.

I've always been impressed with the service that Connect provide, their staff are very knowledgeable and supportive, and are continually working to find solutions to any issues that we face. We are now in a period of embedding the system across our estate and Connect are responsive to any enhancements we identify for the future.

Shani Knight-Cross, Business Transformation Manager



The Result:

Connect Childcare software has now been rolled out across over 40 of The Co-operative Childcare sites.



We have very quickly seen the benefits of working with Connect Childcare.

We didn't realise just how long-winded some of our processes, such as debt management, were, but now we have been able to streamline a wide range of our administrative processes and help the business to run more efficiently.

The benefits are also being felt by the 8,000 parents we work in partnership with, as we have been able to offer them a better range of payment options including six monthly direct debits.



Employees across the group can see the benefits of Connect's products.



It has allowed us to improve our partnership with parents. We've had really good feedback about ParentZone as a tool for communicating and engaging with our parents and we've seen an increase in parent satisfaction around the way we communicate with them

We've streamlined really lengthy, paper heavy, administrative processes and now information is available at our fingertips. As the system embeds in our culture, colleagues are realising the benefits of Connect more and more as they become confident in using it. Ultimately it allows our colleagues more time doing what they love, which is caring for our children.

Richard Pittaway, the groups Childcare Central Coordinator, has seen a notable difference in his role at Head Office as well as improved efficiency across the nurseries.



Connect provides us with a much smoother process than the previous systems we've used. We've found that whenever we have questions they're answered really quickly and the support staff are really helpful when we call.

With Connect it is very easy for me to provide central support to all of our nurseries as a lot of the inherent processes are very straight forward. For example, if I need to assist a nursery with a billing query, it is very easy for me to log in, have a look at the event log to study what has happened, and resolve the issue remotely. Connect Childcare allows me to provide really efficient support to all of our nurseries.

Richard Pittaway, Childcare Central Coordinator



Richard confirmed the impact that the global reporting facility has had on the company whose main challenge before finding Connect was a difficulty in producing accurate reports across the estate.



Our reporting ability has improved hugely. The reports we can run from Connect Childcare provide us with important Management Information that we would have struggled to compile previously.