



KEEP ANGLIA RUSKIN NURSERY OPEN CAMPAIGN REPORT

For the attention of:	Executive Committee	Taking place on:	09/12/15
Name:	Grace Anderson, on behalf of the Executive Officers	Action:	To note

Summary: *This paper provides an update on the priority campaign(s) of the Executive Committee member*

Priority campaign(s) and objective(s)

We have been campaigning against the closure of Cambridge campus' nursery over the last few weeks. Our original statement is below:

“Keep the Cambridge campus nursery open. This is a necessary resource for our students and staff. We are inclusive and accessible and the decision to close the nursery goes against the university’s mission and values.

On Thursday 12th November, Sammi Whitaker (President) and Sarah Haider (Experience Officer, Cambridgeshire) met with representatives from Student Services and were informed that the university had made the decision to close the nursery on the Cambridge campus.

We were not consulted before this decision was made, we do not support this decision and we will be challenging it.

We have always been proud of Anglia Ruskin University's efforts and successes in being an accessible and inclusive university. We are a university that welcomes and supports a diverse range of students, many of whom are mature students, the first in their family to attend university and/or have caring responsibilities. It's this reason we're so disappointed to learn that the university has chosen to remove the support which makes Anglia Ruskin accessible to student parents. This childcare may be the deciding factor in whether or not these students can complete their degree.

There are suggestions that the vacated nursery will be converted into student social space. We would not support this. Sophie May (Communications Officer) said “We couldn't expect anyone to use this space knowing that it is taking away vital provision from the people who need it so much, leaving our peers at home and unable to attend lectures because they don't have access to affordable, local childcare.”

We have learnt that there are currently thirteen students using the nursery and there is a waiting list of a further seventeen students. There are also five members of staff using the service. This too will affect our students; if a lecturer is unable to attend work due to a lack of childcare.

If you believe in an inclusive and accessible university, we urge you to take a moment to think about the student parents that will be affected by this decision. It's our sincere hope that you will support us in this fight.”

Progress on priority campaign(s)

After we released this statement, we created an online petition that achieved over 2,000 signatures. Sammi and Grace took these responses to a meeting with the university called USU (University and Students' Union Liaison) which happens monthly. In USU, it was very clear that the university would be closing the nursery despite the campaign and its impact, and the meetings focus shifted to what we could do to assist current student parents using the nursery. It also highlighted a concern for what is being done for student parents that aren't using the nursery.

The options offered from the university are as follows:

- The nursery will close at the later date of August 2016 instead of the originally proposed date of June 2016. This will provide parents with a greater lead in time to find new nursery spaces, which tend to start in September.
- ARU have committed to ring-fencing the subsidy currently used to run the nursery to support future student parents.

- ARU have committed to create a more holistic package for students with children across our Cambridge, Chelmsford and Peterborough campuses. We await further detail of this package.
- ARU have confirmed the creation of a dedicated Childcare Adviser who will be appointed to help students with financial and childcare related advice. They will have a ring-fenced fund to help student parents.
- ARU will now include a self-declaration box to the registration/re-registration process each year, to ensure that the University has a better understanding of how many students have dependent children and where they live, so that the University can pro-actively offer support, advice and information.
- ARU have confirmed that the university's Equality and Diversity Group have considered the situation for pregnant students and are putting in place new processes to offer better support. We look forward to receiving further information on what these processes will entail.

This has been taken from our latest statement, entitled "**Cambridge Nursery: A New Deal For Student Parents**" and can be found here: <http://www.angliastudent.com/news/article/union/Cambridge-Nursery-A-New-Deal-For-Student-Parents/>

Since we posted this statement, we have been speaking with student, staff and community parents, and have closed our petition. Our stance is still against the closure of the nursery, but we have aimed to get the best outcomes for student parents out of this as we possibly can.

Grace, Sophie and Sammi have been leading on this campaign.

Further support required from the Executive Committee/Students' Union

As this is an SU stance, we are asking for the full Executive Committee to be in support of this.

The Officers will be writing a paper to take to the next USU meeting about how we can adapt the university experience (in the university and SU) to make ourselves accessible to student parents. Grace will be leading on this paper. Input from the full executive committee would make this paper much stronger, and it would be great to hear what you think should be in there.