



# WORKPLACE NURSERY CASE STUDY

## RAF Northolt

The Royal Air Force is the air force of the UK and the oldest independent air force in the world. Currently employing over 40,000 regular service personnel, the RAF has a vision to be an agile, adaptable and capable Air Force that, person for person, is second to none, and that makes a decisive air power contribution in support of the UK Defence Mission.

RAF Northolt has been identified as a 'Core Defence Site' and is home to over 2,000 personnel and units such as the Queen's Colour Squadron and the Central Band of the Royal Air Force as well as the British Forces Post Office.





# The Challenge

Organisational changes within the RAF, (specifically a consolidation of units following the closure of RAF Uxbridge and RAF Bentley Priory), resulted in a significant increase in the number of service personnel stationed at RAF Northolt. An assessment of the current nursery capabilities concluded that the existing nursery would not fulfil the future needs of the station. With the generous support of the RAF Benevolent Fund a new nursery facility was commissioned and the contract for the management of the nursery was put out to tender.

The mandatory requirement was to demonstrate a commitment to providing high-quality early years care and education whilst maintaining an affordable fee structure. The RAF and MoD Defence Estates also wanted to find a provider with a nationwide presence and one that could bear the financial risk associated with the nursery operation.

# Our Solution

Bright Horizons was selected as the nursery provider for the new, 72 place nursery for an initial 5 year period, proposing to:

- Meet all the key operating requirements relating to opening hours/dates, meal provision, admissions policy, staff management, variable fee structures, customer satisfaction and key appointment approvals.
- Offer a return on the investment in the new building in the form of a lease contract and rental payment.
- Operate the nursery as a commercial venture and to own all associated financial risks.
- Provide the nursery with strong levels of local and national support, including peer nurseries in the region and access to specialist teams such as

HR, IT, Early Years, Finance, Health and Safety and Operational Risk, who are based in the central support office in Northamptonshire.

Bright Horizons was able to demonstrate a clear understanding of the specific security needs at RAF Northolt informed by the experience of operating 6 other nurseries based on MoD sites. This was further evidenced by the company's 'Ready to Respond' plan which was developed to address the specific risks associated with operating a nursery used by service personnel.

Additionally, Bright Horizons' commitment to its own employee development and welfare was clearly demonstrated by a consistent record of recognition as one of the UK's 50 Best Workplaces as defined by the Great Places to Work Institute.

# Implementation

On award of the contract Bright Horizons created a Transition Project Team which included representatives from IT, Early Years, Operations, Finance, HR, and Parent Marketing. The team's key objective was to work with the existing nursery operation and Station personnel to ensure a timely and smooth transition to Bright Horizons management with minimal disruption to children and their families, and to nursery staff transferring under TUPE regulations.

A marketing campaign was launched to ensure all personnel and community parents were aware of the newer, larger nursery facility. This included advertising in RAF Northolt's on-site weekly newsletter and holding open sessions for current and new RAF service personnel, with flyers distributed to promote these sessions. To ensure maximum visibility to the local community, adverts ran in the local press and with parent and child centred

organisations such as the NCT. The nursery held open days when community parents were welcome to visit the new facility. Additionally, the nursery was advertised via other Bright Horizons nurseries in the region.







## Client Feedback

*"The Nursery is essential for the operational effectiveness of our personnel. Day to day we need people to be able to concentrate on their work without having to stress about childcare. While they're on ops we need them to know that they've got a childcare solution in place and that the person looking after their child is aware of the extra pressures of Service*

*life, paying particular attention to their child, still communicating with them even though they're deployed and engaging with the Station to make sure the Service / Community/ Welfare loop is closed off.*

*Bright Horizons was selected from the tender process because they were perceived to offer an all-round, well-*

*practised package with an ethos and identity that was very much aligned to that of the Service. The team are very keen to integrate with the Station and become part of the Community Support and Welfare Team which means we can increasingly work together on issues such as observing children and parents while their Service person is deployed and highlighting*

*concerns to the chain of command, engaging with deployed parents to maintain the parent/child link and working with parents and the chain of command to manage the childcare complexities that service life brings."*

**RAF Northolt**



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RAF Northolt



# About Bright Horizons

## What we do

For more than 35 years, Bright Horizons has been supporting the evolving needs of working families and their employers. We create, develop, and deliver solutions that remove barriers to performance, talent and diversity in our clients' businesses and help them succeed in their goals.

We address the wide range of challenges facing parents and carers in the workplace today, enhancing our clients' ability to attract and retain key talent, giving their teams the peace of mind and confidence to do their best work.

## How we do it

Bright Horizons' services include workplace and partnership nurseries, coaching and development provision, digital resources, and manager guidance, plus Back-Up Care for adults, children of all ages - and even pets.

We provide our clients with access to live usage and engagement analytics on their programmes, and also keep them updated with ongoing research findings and benchmarking data.

## Who we are

- We have operations in the UK, US, India, Australia, and the Netherlands. 1,300 clients globally, over 400 in the UK.
- We have been recognised as a UK Best Workplace by the Great Place to Work Institute every year since 2006, and are actively committed to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging, and to Mindful Business practices.
- We strive to minimise negative environmental impact guided by our Future Earth green agenda and, through our registered charity the Bright Horizons Foundation for Children, to make a positive difference in the lives of children and families in crisis.

## Our family of services includes:



Reliable, flexible **Back-Up Care** options for children of all ages, adults and elders - **and even pets** - when usual arrangements break down or schedules change. Back-Up Care is a trusted Plan B that protects productivity and supports wellbeing.



One to one **Virtual Tutoring** in 35+ subjects for children (aged 4-22 years) and also school entrance exam preparation. Tailored tutoring helps confidence and achievement, while easing parents' concerns about their child's education and mental health.



**Work+Family Space**, an easily searchable and personalised hub for all matters work and family, and a vital resource for busy workers. Filled with a world of information, tips, webinars and expert advice, there's something for everyone - whatever their life stage or personal situation.



Our innovative **Parental Leave Toolkit** is a digitised coaching solution delivering timely checklists and advice to the individual and their manager at every point in the journey, making a significant difference to return rates.

Beyond the parent transition, we've developed tailored coaching programmes for our clients on many major life events.



**Workplace Nurseries and Nursery Partnerships** provide parents with reassuringly high-quality and convenient care at, or near, their workplace.

The ultimate "sticky benefit" and a real game-changer for retention.

Get in touch to discover how we can help your business and your employees:



0345 241 5309



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