

Julie Morgan AS/MS
Y Dirprwy Weinidog Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Deputy Minister for Social Services



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Russell George MS
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Dear Russell,

Thank you for your question in plenary on 24 January, and your previous correspondence regarding Flying Start childcare expansion.

As you are aware, our Programme for Government commits us to continue our support for our flagship Flying Start programme, supporting child development for children aged 0–4 years. And, in line with the Co-operation Agreement with Plaid Cymru, we have extended this commitment to deliver a phased expansion of early years provision to include all two-year-olds, with a particular emphasis on strengthening Welsh-medium provision via Flying Start.

I am investing £46m in Phase 2 of Flying Start childcare expansion in 2023-24 and 2024-25. This will support over 9,500 more two-year-olds to access high quality Flying Start childcare during Phase 2. Delivery of Phase 2 began in April 2023 and all local authorities have been actively offering additional childcare as part of Phase 2 since September 2023.

Flying Start is a geographically targeted programme which uses income benefit data, a proxy indicator for deprivation, to target areas of highest proportions of children aged 0-3 living in income benefit households. For the purposes of Flying Start targeting, each Local Authority is broken up into smaller zones called Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs). In general, those LSOAs with the highest proportion of income benefit households are those which are designated as Flying Start areas, though there is some discretion afforded to local authorities to vary this using local intelligence. Local authorities are increasing the reach of the Flying Start programme by expanding to the next LSOAs as they roll out Flying Start childcare expansion, taking us further than the traditional Flying Start areas.

The Welsh Government is facing the toughest financial situation we have faced since devolution. As a result of these pressures, we are not currently in a position to confirm any new developments to childcare beyond 2024-25, however, we will continue to review the Childcare Offer and the Flying Start programme to ensure as many families are being supported across Wales as possible.

Yours sincerely

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We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.