

Dear

## **ATISN 25129 – Flying Start**

Thank you for your request to the Welsh Government for information under the Freedom of Information Act (2000) received on 8 September 2025.

You requested the following:

*Regarding the Welsh Government's investment and rollout plans for Phase 3 of the Flying Start childcare expansion, as well as uptake data from Phase 2:*

- 1. Breakdown of the £25 million investment currently allocated for Phase 3 (2025–26):*
  - How much of this funding is earmarked for direct payments to childcare providers?*
  - How much is allocated for operational costs, including but not limited to programme development, administration, outreach, workforce support, or infrastructure?*
  - Does this funding include any capital expenditure, or is that covered separately?*
- 2. Rollout plans for Phase 3:*
  - What are the eligibility criteria for accessing Flying Start childcare under Phase 3, including how areas and families are selected?*
  - Projected annual expansion targets, specifically:*
    - The number of children expected to be reached, broken down per year, between now and 2030.*
- 3. Uptake data for Phase 2:*
  - The number of children who received funded childcare under Phase 2, broken down by year (e.g. 2022–23, 2023–24, etc.)*

## **Our Response**

**For ease of reference we have included your request alongside our response.**

- 1. Breakdown of the £25 million investment currently allocated for Phase 3 (2025–26):*
  - How much of this funding is earmarked for direct payments to childcare providers?*
  - How much is allocated for operational costs, including but not limited to programme development, administration, outreach, workforce support, or infrastructure?*
  - Does this funding include any capital expenditure, or is that covered separately?*

The funding for the latest phase (Phase 3) of the Flying Start childcare Expansion programme was included in the allocations provided to local authorities via the Children and Communities Grant (CCG) allocations for 2025-26. Funding for Phase 3 of the programme has been ring-fenced within the CCG to support the expansion programme. Local authorities use the funding from the CCG to undertake a range of key activities: communicate the offer of Flying Start childcare to eligible families in new areas and register new children; attract new providers to the Flying Start childcare expansion programme; procure additional childcare provision; provide support and training to providers to ensure that provision is of an appropriate quality; and administrate the

programme on behalf of the Welsh Govt by providing regular data and reporting.

The Childcare and Early Years Capital Programme is available to local authorities and all childcare settings registered with Care Inspectorate Wales and aims to strengthen and support the childcare infrastructure. The funding helps support the Programme for Government commitments to deliver a phased expansion of early years provision to include all 2-year-olds and strengthening Welsh medium provision.

**2. Rollout plans for Phase 3:**

- *What are the eligibility criteria for accessing Flying Start childcare under Phase 3, including how areas and families are selected?*
- *Projected annual expansion targets, specifically:*
  - *The number of children expected to be reached, broken down per year, between now and 2030*

The Welsh Government allocated the funding for Phase 3 to local authorities, using a deprivation-based formula. This approach is consistent with the way funding for the Core Flying Start programme and the Flying Start Expansion programme has been distributed in previous years. The expansion of Flying Start childcare has deliberately focussed resources on the most disadvantaged communities in the first instance. The funding approach uses income benefit data, a proxy indicator for poverty, to target areas with the highest proportions of children aged 0-3 living in our poorest households. The guidance for the Flying Start childcare expansion programme divides the local authority into more detailed Lower Super Output Areas (typically covering between 400 and 1,200 households). The guidance requires local authorities to expand the reach of Flying Start childcare to cover the most deprived Lower Super Output Areas in their local authorities. However, there is also an outreach element of the programme which provides a degree of flexibility, enabling Flying Start services to be delivered to high need children and families living outside of recognised Flying Start areas.

It is for local authorities to determine the best way of offering this support within the budget agreed by the Welsh Government.

Further expansion of the programme beyond that planned as part of Phase 3 in 2025-26 will require further funding and depend on take-up rates and the number of children reached during this period

**Number of children funded for Flying Start Expansion (Phase 3) 2025-26**

<b>Local Authority</b>	<b>No. of Children funded</b>
Anglesey	95
Blaenau Gwent	150
Bridgend	210

Caerphilly	348
Cardiff	380
Carmarthenshire	250
Ceredigion	73
Conwy	148
Denbighshire	143
Flintshire	197
Gwynedd	147
Merthyr Tydfil	112
Monmouthshire	77
NPT	200
Newport	380
Pembrokeshire	172
Powys	121
RCT	358
Swansea	408
Torfaen	125
Vale of Glamorgan	171
Wrexham	206
<b>Wales</b>	<b>4,471</b>

### 3. Uptake data for Phase 2:

- *The number of children who received funded childcare under Phase 2, broken down by year (e.g. 2022–23, 2023–24, etc.)*

Phase 2 (2023-2024 and 2024-2025) data on the number and percentage of children offered and taking up the offer of Phase 2 Flying Start childcare can be found on the StatsWales link below:

[Number and percentage of children offered Phase 2 Flying Start childcare, by local authority](#)

## Next Steps

If you are dissatisfied with the Welsh Government's handling of your request, you can ask for an internal review within 40 working days of the date of this response. Requests for an internal review should be addressed to the Welsh Government's Freedom of Information Officer at:

Information Rights Unit  
Welsh Government  
Cathays Park  
Cardiff  
CF10 3NQ  
or Email: [Freedom.ofinformation@gov.wales](mailto:Freedom.ofinformation@gov.wales)

Please remember to quote the ATISN reference number above.

You also have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office  
Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire  
SK9 5AF

However, please note that the Commissioner will not normally investigate a complaint until it has been through our own internal review process.

Yours sincerely,