

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



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1362
Ein cyf/Our ref JMSS/00591/23

Jack Sargeant MS
Chair - Petitions committee
Senedd Cymru
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1SN

09 October 2023

Dear Jack,

Thank you for your correspondence on 11 September, regarding the petition from Madeline Hallam asking the Welsh Government to match the new Childcare Offer in England of 15 hours for 2-year-olds from April 2024.

We recognise the pressures many families are currently facing with the rising cost of childcare, particularly in the current cost of living crisis. You will be aware from my response to your previous correspondence regarding the very similar petition from Jade Richards (P-06-1359), we are currently providing support for childcare costs under the Childcare Offer and the Flying Start programme. By progressing the expansion of Flying Start, we will be ensuring that all parents of 2-year-olds served by this programme have access to funded childcare, not just those parents who are working or in education and training as is the case with the Childcare Offer.

Phase 1 of the Flying Start programme has already supported around 2,500 additional children (aged 0-4 years) with funded part-time, high-quality childcare for 2-year-olds; parenting support; enhanced health visitor support; and support for speech, language and communication and has already made a real difference to the lives of children in some of Wales' most disadvantaged communities.

Phase 2 of the expansion programme will continue to make progress on our commitment to "deliver a phased expansion of early years provision to include all 2-year-olds, with a particular emphasis on strengthening Welsh medium provision", as set out in the Co-operation Agreement between the Welsh Government and Plaid Cymru. We are investing £46m in Phase 2 of Flying Start expansion in 2023-24 and 2024-25. This will support over 9,500 more two-year-olds to access quality Flying Start childcare during Phase 2. Delivery of Phase 2 began in April 2023, however, it takes time to build the capacity within the sector.

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
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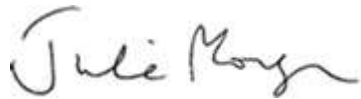
Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

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.

You will also be aware, we expanded the Childcare Offer in September 2022 to support parents in education and training and we continue to review the Offer to ensure it is fair and equitable to as many families as possible throughout Wales.

Unfortunately, as you will know, due to the significant financial pressures we are currently facing, we are not in a position to confirm any new financial developments to support with childcare costs.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julie Morgan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J'.

Julie Morgan AS/MS

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Deputy Minister for Social Services