

Dawn Bowden AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Plant a Gofal Cymdeithasol
Minister for Children and Social Care



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref DB-PO-0204-25

Jenny Rathbone MS
Chair, Equality and Social Justice Committee
Senedd Cymru

29 April 2025

Dear Jenny,

Thank you for your letter of 17 April seeking further clarification of the funding provided for the Flying Start expansion programme and the proportion of children that would be waiting for childcare places by the end of March 2026.

You are right that the Welsh Government remains committed to our Programme for Government 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".

The Final Budget for 2025-26 included over £25m of additional funding for further expansion of high quality Flying Start childcare across Wales. Local authorities have set out plans about how they will continue to expand Flying Start childcare in their areas. The additional funding announced by the Final Budget will make childcare available to the majority of two-year-olds identified in those plans for 2025-26. There are a number of practical obstacles to full rollout including availability of both staff and premises, and lead in times. However, this will make a significant difference to the lives and outcomes of thousands of children across Wales and offer opportunities for more children to access Welsh Medium provision. We would expect Phase 3 of this programme to reach more than 4,000 children in 2025-26.

The proportion of all 2-year-olds that will be offered a Flying Start childcare place will depend on a range of factors. The progress that LAs make towards reaching all 2 year olds with Flying Start childcare will depend on the expansion plans that LAs have developed, the numbers reached to date and takeup levels in both Phases 2 and 3. We are continuing to have discussions with all LAs to understand how we might be able to continue to support their progress and help them overcome any delivery challenges.

Yours sincerely,

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Minister for Children and Social

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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.