

CYP(4)-03-12 (Paper 2)

Evidence paper for the Children and Young People's Committee

Date: 26 January 2012-01-06

Title: Flying Start

Purpose

To provide the Children & Young People's Committee with an overview of the Flying Start programme. The paper includes sections on:

- Delivery;
- Funding;
- Targeting Arrangements;
- Planning for Expansion; and
- Evaluation.

1. Introduction

Flying Start is the Welsh Government's flagship early years programme and provides a path towards improving the life chances of children in our most disadvantaged communities. It provides a "universal" set of entitlements which all children and their families within designated deprived areas can access without associated means testing or stigma. International evidence is that intensive intervention in the early years can make a real difference to outcomes.

2. Delivery

The expansion of Flying Start

The expansion of Flying Start is one of the top 'Five for a Fairer Future' manifesto commitments to be delivered over the next four years. The manifesto commitment states that the Welsh Government will:

Double the number of those gaining from Flying Start to 36,000.

The expansion of the programme will be phased over a number of years to allow for the necessary infrastructure to be put in place, including the recruitment and training of additional health visitors; childcare workers and staff to deliver parenting programmes. The phasing of the expansion will also enable the development of capital infrastructure, and in particular childcare settings, to deliver the programme in its new target areas.

Ensuring steady state delivery prior to expansion

Welsh Government officials are working closely with local authorities and their partners to ensure the consistent delivery of the programme across Wales. A number of authorities are already delivering the programme as prescribed by the guidance and are at a “steady state” of delivery. However, as highlighted by the Evaluation’s Interim Report of October 2010, there remain a number of authorities where variances in the delivery of the entitlements are still apparent.

Work has been ongoing to address the issues faced by some local authorities in delivering the programme in line with the guidance. Officials are working with individual local authorities, and are providing support and advice to resolve those issues that impact on local ability to reach steady state prior to expansion. This will be essential to ensure a consistent approach to the delivery of the core entitlement across Wales. It should be noted that the variances described refer to those instances where the guidance is not being adhered to – for instance, where the childcare offer is limited - and not to those instances where the guidance allows local discretion to tailor services to meet specific needs within communities.

We are aware, from the findings of the National Evaluation, that in some instances there have been difficulties engaging with some of the hardest to reach, including socio-economically deprived groups. We will continue to work with local authorities to ensure they can meet the diverse needs of all the individuals and communities that Flying Start supports. Welsh medium provision and provision of support that meets the needs of ethnic minority communities will continue to be an integral part of the programme.

3. Funding

Prior to 2012/13, Flying Start funding has been allocated to each local authority using the Children’s Personal Social Services Standard Spending Assessment Formula, which draws on a range of indicators from the 0 – 18 age group. Whilst this method for the distribution of resource has enabled the programme to reach a number of disadvantaged communities within each local authority, the data used to inform this method is now out of date. It is also based on children aged 0 – 18 which does not fit well with the age range of children eligible for Flying Start services. Whilst the existing provision will continue to be funded on this basis, to reduce turbulence within the existing target areas, the basis on which funding is allocated to local authorities for the expansion of the programme has been revised. Funding for the expansion of the programme will be derived from the estimated number of 0-3 year olds living in income benefit households in local authority areas. There are a number of advantages to this revised approach:

- it is a proxy indicator for poverty;
- it is an indicator for worklessness and a proxy indicator for children living in households with parents who have poor basic skills; both of which have been shown to impact negatively on child outcomes;

- it reflects the absolute levels of 0-3 year olds living in income deprived households across Wales;
- it only uses data from the Flying Start target age group: families with children aged 0-3

The Flying start budget for the next three financial years is as follows:

Flying Start Revenue BEL	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
	£40.494m	£46.494m	£62.994m	£72.994m

Local Authority indicative allocations are at annex A.

The expansion of Flying Start cannot be delivered using revenue alone. There is a strong interdependence in the programme between capital investment and revenue spend; it is not possible to deliver the services, funded by the revenue grant, unless the necessary capital infrastructure is in place. A total of £6 million capital funding has been made available over the next two financial years 2012-13 and 2013-14. Officials are working closely with local authorities to develop plans for the expansion of Flying Start capital infrastructure. The emphasis will be on the creative use of resources, efficiency and the utilisation of existing private, 3rd sector and local authority owned infrastructure.

4. Targeting arrangements

In December 2011, local authorities were issued with their allocations for 2012-13, indicative allocations for 2013 - 15, target cap numbers¹ and a list of their LSOAs that included detailed estimates of the total number of 0-3 year olds, and the number of 0-3 year olds living in income benefit households, within them. This data provides the broad basis for local authorities to begin identifying their new target areas for the expansion of the programme. Within these LSOAs there will inevitably be a proportion of 0-3 year olds that do not live in income benefit households and others that do not need the support of Flying Start. The programme will still be geographically based and local authorities will be required to use local knowledge to define their target areas, on concentrations of children living in income benefit households, to ensure that the programme reaches those most in need of support.

Outreach

In order to ensure that services reach those most in need of support, as part of the expansion of the Flying Start, local authorities will be expected to use outreach work in identifying those families that do not live within target areas, but who would nevertheless benefit from Flying Start services. In this way, the

¹ The cap number is the number of children a local authority is expected to support from within their funding being made available to them. These numbers are put in place to ensure the intensity of the programme so that services are not diluted.

expanded programme will be more flexible and will be able to better respond to the needs of transient families and those in rural areas. For the first year - on a pilot basis where local flexibilities will be applied – funding for this outreach work has been set at 2.5% of a local authority's uplifted revenue allocation, with families being referred through appropriate referral mechanisms such as the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) or the Joint Assessment Family Framework (JAFF). We will be working closely with local authorities over the coming months to develop this aspect of the programme further.

5. Planning for expansion

Local authorities were notified of their 2012-15 indicative allocations in December 2011. At the same time they were provided with the necessary data to begin planning an expansion of Flying Start within their borders. Outline plans are due for submission on 31 January 2012 and will provide an indication as to what can be achieved during the first two years of expansion. The key dates in the planning process at this stage are as follows:

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|-----------------|---|
| 31 January 2012 | Local authorities to submit detailed one-year revenue plan for the 2012/13 financial year and an outline capital plan spanning 2012-15 |
| March 2012 | Welsh Government to issue revised guidance for the Flying Start programme to inform plans for 2013 onwards |
| 31 May 2012 | Local authorities to submit three-year strategic revenue grant plan for 2012-15 based on the revised guidance. The planning for 2012/13 will largely be an iterative process with Welsh Government officials working closely with local government stakeholders to agree early details for expansion. |

Workforce development activity

Delivery of the manifesto commitment to double the number of children who benefit from Flying Start is dependant upon an appropriate workforce being in place to expand the services, and in particular on having sufficient numbers of health visitors (to maintain the 1:110 caseload) and childcare workers.

Health Visitors

An assessment of requirements indicates that the provision of health visiting services at the same caseload level as currently employed (i.e. one health visitor per 110 children) would require an additional resource of 160 new posts to deliver the manifesto commitment. There are currently approximately 570 health visitors in the generic service and therefore a significant recruitment and training drive is required to achieve the number of health visitors that the expanded Flying Start programme will require.

Welsh Government officials are working closely with colleagues from NHS Workforce and Organisational Development and the National Leadership and Innovation Agency for Healthcare (NLI AH) and Higher Education providers to develop a strategic health visitor workforce training plan that will support the expansion of the Flying Start programme. A significant recruitment drive is already underway to achieve the number of health visitors that the expanded Flying Start programme will require.

Childcare workforce

To enable the successful expansion of Flying Start, local authorities need to ensure that the right number of childcare workers and leaders are in place at the right time and at the right quality with the appropriate qualification levels. Local authorities have been asked to plan for the development of their childcare workforce in readiness for the expansion of the programme. The childcare sufficiency assessment refresh analysis which is being undertaken by local authorities will help inform this process. Consideration is also being given at a national level to the quality of childcare, appropriateness of qualifications and availability of suitable training provision.

6. Evaluation of Flying Start

Evaluation is key to ensuring that our programmes are making an impact and I recently published the Wave 1 evaluation survey report *'Findings from the baseline survey of families – mapping needs and measuring early influence among families with babies aged 7-20 months in December 2011.*

The report has provided us with important information on the needs of families in Flying Start areas and the challenges they face as well as the early influence of the programme. The survey highlighted that:

- Flying Start has been successful in increasing the levels of support that families have been receiving;
- Families in Flying Start areas receive higher levels of support for health visiting services, parenting programmes and Language and Play (LAP) than those living in comparison areas;
- Parents feel more positive about the services and support provided to them.
- Parents who have attended specific Flying Start groups report that their confidence as a parent has increased, they feel better able to make decisions about how to look after their baby and have a better understanding of their child's general development;
- Many report seeing positive changes in their child's behaviour since attending Flying Start parenting courses.

The focus on improving language development appears to have been successful and many parents in Flying Start areas are engaged in home learning activities with their children.

The report also suggested that Flying Start has yet to show a positive difference on breastfeeding and immunisation rates and weaning within the recommended timescale. However, the timescales involved in achieving family and community level change in parenting behaviour are often relatively long and certainly longer than the time period up until the survey fieldwork. For this reason, the range and level of behavioural change that it is realistic to expect from Flying Start at the time the survey was conducted is relatively limited. I will look to future monitoring and evaluation activity to track progress on these and other indicators.

This survey report is part of the wider evidence base for Flying Start and part of the ongoing evaluation of the programme. A second survey wave is scheduled for summer 2012 and will involve returning to as many of the same families from Wave 1 as possible when the children are older. At this point, the families will have had the opportunity to receive a fuller range of Flying Start services and therefore the second survey wave will provide a fuller assessment of impact.

7. Implications for Delivery

Officials have considered the findings of the National Evaluation wave 1 survey and Interim Report and are working with local authorities and their partners to identify examples of good practice. Where appropriate, these will be reflected in revised programme guidance. Officials will also be rigorously monitoring local authority performance to ensure that Flying Start services are delivered to those children and families who are most in need of support.

In addition to longitudinal evaluation activity I have also approved the commissioning of evidence reviews to support the provision of effective family support and early language development activity, both of which are core elements of the Flying Start offer. The findings from all research and evaluation activity in conjunction with internal monitoring data will be used to inform programme guidance and to support the development of Flying Start as we expand the programme.

8. Integration with wider Welsh Government policy

Links are in place at policy and programme level to ensure the successful delivery of this commitment. The Flying Start programme board membership ensures that flagship programmes - including Families First, Integrated Family Support Services and Communities First - are supporting the expansion of Flying Start and working towards the delivery of a truly holistic service for children, young people and families in Wales.

Gwenda Thomas AM
Deputy Minister for Children and Social Services

Annex A

SF/GT/0057/12

Local Authority	2011-12 Allocation	2012-13 allocation	2013-14 Indicative Allocation	2014-15 Indicative Allocation
Anglesey	£781,628	£823,477	£1,182,183	£1,391,429
Blaenau Gwent	£1,197,463	£1,257,355	£1,770,717	£2,070,178
Bridgend	£1,617,297	£1,714,236	£2,545,141	£3,029,835
Caerphilly	£2,716,042	£2,857,849	£4,073,334	£4,782,367
Cardiff	£4,844,853	£5,157,418	£7,836,542	£9,399,365
Carmarthenshire	£1,949,651	£2,057,978	£2,986,498	£3,528,135
Ceredigion	£613,900	£643,469	£896,915	£1,044,759
Conwy	£1,186,173	£1,247,780	£1,775,843	£2,083,880
Denbighshire	£1,081,613	£1,142,877	£1,668,000	£1,974,321
Flintshire	£1,526,181	£1,608,301	£2,312,189	£2,722,790
Gwynedd	£1,167,996	£1,228,780	£1,749,786	£2,053,707
Merthyr Tydfil	£1,082,250	£1,140,358	£1,638,431	£1,928,973
Monmouthshire	£647,482	£678,423	£943,630	£1,098,335
Neath Port Talbot	£1,956,858	£2,066,832	£3,009,465	£3,559,334
Newport	£2,402,786	£2,534,233	£3,660,924	£4,318,160
Pembrokeshire	£1,368,347	£1,437,844	£2,033,532	£2,381,016
Powys	£992,387	£1,041,851	£1,465,830	£1,713,151
Rhondda Cynon Taf	£3,548,173	£3,736,357	£5,349,359	£6,290,277
Swansea	£3,066,017	£3,243,155	£4,761,483	£5,647,173
Torfaen	£1,421,567	£1,492,848	£2,103,824	£2,460,228
Vale of Glamorgan	£1,354,446	£1,422,434	£2,005,184	£2,345,122
Wrexham	£1,520,891	£1,610,146	£2,375,190	£2,821,466
All-Wales Total	£38,044,000	£40,144,001	£58,144,001	£68,644,001

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