# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE**  | **Continued expansion of Government Funded Childcare Offer from September 2018** |
| **DATE**  | **19 June 2018** |
| **BY** | **Huw Irranca-Davies, Minister for Children, Older People and Social Care** |

Today I am pleased to announce a doubling of our efforts and continued momentum in the delivery of the Welsh Government funded Childcare Offer.

Our offer commits the Welsh Government to providing 30 hours of government-funded early education and childcare for working parents of 3 and 4 year olds for 48 weeks of the year. This includes term time and holiday provision. Key to our work in developing and rolling out this offer will be quality of provision and equity of access – both in terms of geographical reach and language.

In September 2017 we began a programme of government funded childcare with seven Early Implementer Local Authorities (ELIAs), to help us to begin to understand and ensure that we meet the needs of children, parents and providers when the offer is fully rolled out across Wales from September 2020. In April, I announced an expansion within four of the seven EILAs and this has enabled the delivery of the offer across the whole of Anglesey, Gwynedd and Caerphilly, with Rhondda Cynon Taf including additional wards. I am pleased to confirm the offer has since been rolled out across the whole of Flintshire, and Swansea is continuing with a phased approach until January 2019, when the offer will be available authority wide. Details of exact areas will be available on their Family Information Services webpage.

Alongside this, we have been working closely with other local authorities on a rolling programme of delivery for further early implementation. As a result of this collaborative approach, and in order to allow us to expand and test aspects of the delivery of the offer in new local authorities, I am announcing plans to bring on board an additional seven EILAs from September 2018. These are Ceredigion, Wrexham, Conwy, Newport, Cardiff, Neath Port Talbot and Torfaen. This also doubles the total amount of children eligible for the offer. We anticipate that the offer will be delivered in at least some parts of most local authorities in Wales by September 2019.

I have also agreed to a new delivery model for this next phase of the early implementation. The new model focuses on maximising partnership working between authorities within an education consortia region and sees new EILAs working with existing EILAs to maximise learning and deliver economies of scale. Arrangements are currently being finalised between partner authorities and I will provide a further update in the autumn on how these partnerships are progressing. The following provides further information about the approach being taken in each of the new EILAs:

**Ceredigion** will implement the offer across the whole local authority from September 2018. This will test the impact of the offer in a sparsely populated rural authority and arrangements are well advanced for September roll-out.

In **Wrexham**, the offer will be available in the wards of Llay, Gwersyllt East and South, Gwersyllt North, Gwersyllt west, New Broughton, Coedpoeth, Ponciau, Gresford East and west, Rossett, Marford and Hoseley, Holt, Bronington, Overton and Brymbo. These wards will help test cross border working and implementation of the offer with a partner authority such as Flintshire and neighbouring English authorities.

In **Conwy**, the offer will be available in the wards of Betws-y-Coed, Betws yn Rhos, Caerhun, Eglwysbach, Gele, Gogarth, Gower, Crwst, Kinmel Bay, Llanddulas, Llangernyw, Llansannan, Llanfair TH, Pentrefoelas, Mostyn, Towyn, Trefriw, Uwch Conwy, Uwchaled, Pensarn, Pentre Mawr and Tudno. This will ensure eligible children from lower income households can take advantage of the offer. It will also provide a good geographical coverage of the county to ensure demand and corresponding capacity within the childcare market is tested in both urban and rural areas.

In **Newport**, the offer will be available in the following areas from September: Rogerstone, Lliswerry, Maplas, St Julians, Stow Hill, Shaftesbury, Maesglas and Gaer. These areas offer a mix of employment professions and skills and the employed populations are broadly representative of all Newport residents. The landscapes include rural, suburban and city centre profiles and the areas chosen will facilitate testing of childcare market capacity, particularly welsh language provision, and will test cross boarder relationships in delivery.

Early implementation in **Cardiff** will be focused on the southern arc of the city, including the wards of: Grangetown, Butetown, Riverside, Adamsdown, Cathays, Plasnewydd, Caerau, Splott, Ely and Llanrumney. Cardiff have prioritised areas where the percentage of dependent children and three and four year olds living in working households claiming working tax credits are highest, targeting families that are in work and potentially eligible but on lower incomes.

**Neath Port Talbot** will test the offer on a phased approach with delivery in the following electoral wards from September: Tai-Bach, Resolven, Baglan, Aberavon, Pontardawe, Blaengwrach, Onllwyn, Bryn-coch South, Glyncorrwg, Gwaun-Cae-Gurwen, Cymer and

Lower Brynamman. Neath Port Talbot will ascertain demand for the offer with a cross section of the authority in order to be able to provide support and build capacity for their childcare sector. The wards chosen include areas of both high and low employment, ensuring potential eligible children from lower income households can access the offer.

**Torfaen** will implement the offer across the whole local authority from September 2018.

The new EILAs will be open for applications soon to allow for parents to apply and secure funding ahead of children taking up childcare under the offer from September. Each authority will have its own process for doing so and parents will be directed to information on each authority’s web site.

As part of the early implementation, we have always been clear about the need to learn and adapt the offer where necessary. One area where concerns have been raised by parents and providers has been in relation to registered childminders being unable to receive funding for the care of a relative under the offer. Childminders are vital to ensuring there is capacity in the childcare sector to deliver the offer and in providing the wrap-around care often needed to allow parents to access both their child’s early education entitlement and additional childcare. As a result of representations from parents, providers, organisations and Assembly Members, we have listened and undertaken a review of the policy around funding childminders to provide care for a relative, drawing on evidence from the sector and weighing up the pros and cons of any change.

On balance, I have decided to change the policy for the Childcare Offer to allow registered childminders to receive funding for the care of a child who is also a relative. These changes will be made from September 2018 to coincide with the expansion of our offer. The guidance will set out that childminders must be registered with CIW to be able to access the Offer and that the care cannot be provided in the child’s home. In the longer term, we will need to amend the Child Minding and Day Care Exceptions (Wales) Order 2010. However, there are other parts of the Order which may need consideration and I would prefer that to be done in a coherent way rather than amending the Order on an ad hoc basis.

Today’s announcement regarding further expansion from this September demonstrates progress and real momentum around our Childcare Offer. This early implementation is helping us shape an offer which meets the needs of parents and it is making a real difference in the lives of working parents throughout Wales.