



Llywodraeth Cymru
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Flying Start

Strategic Guidance



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Contents

Section 1:	Flying Start Guidance – A Strategic Direction	3
Section 2:	Flying Start Core Elements	4
2.1	Childcare	5
2.2	Health Visiting and Midwifery	6
2.3	Parenting	7
2.4	Early Language Development	7
2.5	Outreach	8
2.6	Key Principles	8
2.6.1	Multi Agency Working and Co-location	8
2.6.2	Early Identification, Effective Assessment and Referral	8
2.6.3	Hard to Reach Groups	9
2.6.4	Transition	9
2.6.5	Information Sharing	9
2.6.6	Governance	9
2.6.7	Performance and Monitoring	10
2.6.8	Evaluation	10
2.6.9	Safeguarding	10
Section 3:	Forward Look/ Future Guidance	11



Section 1:

Flying Start Guidance – A Strategic Direction

Flying Start is the Welsh Government's flagship Early Years programme for families with children who are under 4 years of age and is targeted in some of our most deprived areas in Wales. It is a vital tool in delivering the 7 Core Aims for children and young people.

Flying Start is one of the Welsh Government's top priorities and we are committed to doubling the number of children and their families benefiting from the Flying Start programme from 18,000 to 36,000 during the course of this administration. To this end an additional £55 million revenue funding and £6 million capital has been made available over the course of the next three years.

The programme aims to make a decisive difference to the life chances of children aged under 4 in the areas which it runs. It includes four core elements – free quality childcare, parenting support, intensive health visitor support, and support for early literacy. In addition, from 2012, an element of outreach work will be included in the programme.

This Flying Start strategic guidance updates and builds upon previous Flying Start guidance issued by the Welsh Government.

This Flying Start guidance is intended to inform the development by local authorities and their partners, of a 3 year strategic plan for 2012 -2015 to deliver this commitment. This plan, based on local authorities' indicative Flying Start allocations issued in December 2011, should be submitted to the Welsh Government for consideration no later than the end of May 2012. The Welsh Government Flying Start team will then work with local authorities and their partners to ensure quality, consistency of planning and delivery at a local level. 2012/13 is identified as a transition year and a move towards key changes being incorporated and consolidated in 2013/14.

Expectations of what the 3 year strategic plan should include are outlined in section 2.1 of this document, Core Programme Elements, and section 2.2, Key Principles and apply equally to existing and new Flying Start areas.

Local authorities are expected to work in partnership from the outset with all stakeholders including Local Health Boards, voluntary and private sectors. Chief Executives of LHB's will be required to sign off relevant sections of the plans before submitting to the Welsh Government.

The Welsh Government has re-affirmed its commitment to supporting the most deprived communities across Wales not only through the expansion of Flying Start, but also in the continuation of the Communities First programme and through ongoing development and implementation of Families First and Integrated Family Support Services. Flying Start plans should therefore clearly articulate how these programmes will be linked together at a local level, and what governance and/or other arrangements are in place to ensure integrated local planning and delivery in the context of the local needs assessment. Together, these programmes link and promote access to services and make them more widely available to disadvantaged families and communities. Copies of needs assessments should be submitted with the Flying Start plans.

This document is not available in printed format, but will be available on the Welsh Government website. This strategic guidance will be built upon over the coming months and will form part of a suite of information that will be updated to include Annexes in relation to key elements of the programme, good practice, reports, links to research, evaluation and other communications from the Welsh Government.

Section 2:

Flying Start Core Elements

The primary focus of the Flying Start plan must be the 4 core elements of the programme:

- Quality part-time childcare for all 2 -3 year olds in Flying Start areas;
- Enhanced Health Visiting Service with 1:110 caseloads;
- Parenting programmes and support;
- Early language development.

All eligible families must be able to access the 4 core elements and all investments must be based on well evaluated methods of working. In addition, from 2012-13, an element of outreach will be introduced into the programme.

In some instances Flying Start funds may be used for purposes which complement the core element, but the core element must take priority. The Flying Start plan must provide details of the budgets and resources allocated to each of the elements, and, where appropriate, other elements of the local Flying Start offer.

2.1 Childcare

The core Flying Start childcare offer is that quality childcare is offered to parents of all eligible 2-3 year olds for 2 ½ hours a day, 5 days a week for 39 weeks. In addition, there should be at least 15 sessions of provision for the family during the school holidays. The childcare offer should be linked to foundation phase entry into schools to ensure a seamless transition between the two offers with no gaps in provision. Flexibility may be required for working parents when allocating childcare. Flying Start plans should set out what these arrangements will be. The plan

should also set out arrangements for managing childcare places with a view to maximising uptake by the child, as well as ensuring value for money in terms of reallocation. The plan should set out arrangements in relation to the needs of children who require special care. This could be due to additional needs, and the preference of parents for Welsh medium and / or bilingual childcare.

Local authorities are responsible for ensuring sufficiency and quality of settings and the workforce, including appropriate levels of training and qualification (level 3 NVQ/QCF for support workers and level 4 NVQ (or the new Level 5 QCF equivalent for leaders). All Flying Start settings must be registered by CSSIW and local authorities must inform Welsh Government where this is not the case or ceases to be so.

Within childcare all Flying Start children must be assessed, using a Welsh Government approved assessment tool, firstly on entry to the childcare setting and again during the last four weeks in the Flying Start setting. Parents should be kept fully informed about the outcomes of the assessment and encouraged to support the sharing of information when children transfer to the next stage in their education such as playgroup, nursery, childminder or school.

As well as addressing these core elements of the childcare offer, your Flying Start plan should include details of the additional childcare settings the local authority will secure in order to expand the programme. Consideration should be given to all delivery options, including the mixed economy approach of private and voluntary settings as well as local authority delivery. The provision of childcare can remove barriers for some parents from work, but in this programme,



the needs of the child will be the central focus. This part of the plan should include an analysis of requirements for a suitably qualified workforce, including local solutions to deliver. We also expect plans to clearly link to any application for capital funding.

The Flying Start link teacher is an essential element in order to ensure quality and transition.

Further guidance on specific expectations in relation to the core childcare element of Flying Start will be set out in an Annex to this guidance.

2.2 Health Visiting and Midwifery

Key to programme delivery is the requirement that there must be one full time equivalent health visitor per 110 children aged under 4 in the target areas. This is to ensure delivery of intensive support to Flying Start children and their families. LHB's will be expected to contribute that proportion of the budget which reflects the proportion of the generic health visiting caseload being transferred to Flying Start health visitors. Flying Start should only be paying for the additional workforce required to deliver the expansion at the 1:110 ratio. This reflects that Flying Start is additional to existing provision and not a substitute for the same.

In addition, and working closely with the LHB, the plan should clearly define local arrangements for ensuring smooth transition of 4 years olds between Flying Start health visitors and the school nurse.

As set out in the previous Flying Start guidance and underpinned by the findings of the interim evaluation, the plan should also reflect the need for Flying Start health visitors to be co-located within the Flying Start team, supported as appropriate by administrative and management staff. Line management and reporting arrangements should be included within this element of the plan, as should any local arrangements in respect of clinical

or operational supervision. It is anticipated that a Flying Start specific, non case holding, Health Visiting Manager will be employed in each local authority.

The primary function of the Flying Start health visitor is to support the family in the home, assessing both the child (using an appropriate Welsh Government approved developmental assessment tool), and the family (in terms of high, medium and low risk). Flying Start health visitors should continually assess those families identified as medium and high risk, and make appropriate referrals.

Further guidance on specific expectations in relation to the role of the Flying Start health visitor, including assessment and referral, will be set out in an Annex to this guidance.

In some local authorities, midwives are employed as part of the core Flying Start team. Whether or not this is the case locally, we expect Flying Start health visitors to work closely with generic midwives working with Flying Start parents. This will enable both the Flying Start health visitor and the midwife to have an opportunity to influence the parenting agenda in relation to these families, at a time when parents themselves are likely to be most receptive. Particular emphasis should be placed on working with the most vulnerable groups including teenage parents, those who are victims of, or may be at risk of domestic abuse and pre/post natal depression, and the plan should reflect arrangements for this.

The Welsh Government, working with key partners, is in the process of developing a Service Level Agreement to be used across Flying Start in Wales. This will be available in 2012.

2.3 Parenting

The parenting element of the Flying Start offer should be delivered, where possible, using a co-located, dedicated Flying Start parenting team. Plans should set-out clearly what arrangements are



in place to support this. The parenting offer should be based on the following three themes:

- Perinatal and support in the early years;
- Early intervention approaches to supporting vulnerable parents; and
- Programmes to support parents in positive parenting.

Every family with a Flying Start child must be offered formal parenting support at least on an annual basis. This can be in groups or one to one in the home with a mix of formal and informal support depending on need.

In addition to the universal formal parenting offer, other parenting programmes may be delivered where assessment evidences additional need.

Further guidance on specific expectations in relation to the parenting element of Flying Start will be set out in an Annex to this guidance. This will include further guidance on the parenting programmes within each of the themes identified above.

2.4 Early Language Development

Evidence shows that early language ability is an important predictor of later progress in literacy and has an impact on social skills as well as behaviour of children.

The Welsh Government is committed to reviewing this element of the Flying Start offer. In the interim, the following strategic guidance should be applied:

Every family in a Flying Start area should have ongoing access to an appropriate language and play group. From this, a more targeted approach based on assessment and referral can be taken where there is evidence of additional need. In some local authorities, speech and language therapists are employed as part of the core Flying Start team. Where this approach can be linked to evidence

of local need and impact on outcomes, it will be supported by the Welsh Government.

This element of the Flying Start offer should be delivered, where possible, using a co-located, dedicated Flying Start team. Plans should set-out clearly, what arrangements are in place to support this.

Further guidance on specific expectations in relation to the Early Language Development element of Flying Start will be set out in an Annex to this guidance.

2.5 Outreach

In addition to the 4 core elements, an element of outreach work should be included in plans for the expansion of the Flying Start programme. Initially the small numbers will only allow for pilot projects which will inform future years' planning. All four elements of Flying Start must be offered to each child as part of the outreach programme. For 2012-13, funding for outreach is set at 2.5% of your *additional* Flying Start revenue allocation. The plan should include details of the proposed referral mechanism, which should link closely to Families First. We expect you to use governance mechanisms already in place through these programmes which should be both robust and transparent. .

Outreach will be evaluated during the course of 2012-13 and the outcome of this evaluation will be used to inform further guidance on this element of the programme.



2.6 Key Principles

All plans should include a section on each of the key principles identified below. Your plan should evidence how these principles are being applied in the delivery of the programme.

2.6.1 Multi Agency Working and Co-location

The development of a multi agency approach to Flying Start is key to the effectiveness of the programme and is instrumental in supporting both children and families, enabling early identification, assessment and referral. Multi agency Flying Start teams should therefore be established in every local authority and the plan should evidence that this is the case. Plans should demonstrate how multi agency proposals are part of, compatible with, or link to Team Around the Family approaches being implemented as part of Authorities' Families First plans.

2.6.2 Early Identification, Effective Assessment and Referral

Early identification of need through effective assessment, followed-up by appropriate and timely referral, is key to improving outcomes for children.

A thorough early assessment by the Health Visitor that makes best use of all Flying Start resources and other agencies is essential. Systems should be developed that give full consideration to issues of engagement with the family, exploring and developing best practice whilst building trust and relationships.

Close working with the midwifery service will ensure the earliest possible identification of potential need. Flying Start staff should work collaboratively with all elements within the programme, promoting them to families and providing referral both within them and to other agencies where appropriate

i.e. Families First (your systems should be at least compatible with development of Joint Assessment Family Frameworks and Team Around the Family), Communities First and IFSS.



2.6.3 Hard to Reach Groups

Flying Start plans should place particular emphasis on working with hard to reach groups.

We recognise that these groups may vary between local authorities, and that particular local issues will be identified in the first instance in your local needs assessment. Your plans must have specific actions to be taken in relation to identifying, engaging and working with these groups.

2.6.4 Transition

Transition is a time where additional support may be required both by children and families, and your plans should reflect arrangements to deliver this.

We expect you to put in place systems to ensure smooth transitions both into and out of Flying Start settings, including into the Foundation Phase, as well as movements between services, including for example the school nurse and IFSS.

Your Flying Start Plans should clearly identify what arrangements are in place locally to ensure smooth transition across and between the range of services and programmes with which Flying Start families may/will engage.

Your plans should also make reference to how you are working with other agencies to support these identified transitions.

Further guidance on specific expectations in relation to transition arrangements will be set out in an Annex to this guidance.

2.6.5 Information Sharing

The Wales Accord for the Sharing of Information (WASPI) has been adopted by Welsh Government as the single “Gold Standard” for sharing personal information.

We expect local authorities and Flying Start practitioners to work together to provide the necessary support, advice and training to ensure the WASPI Framework is followed. This applies equally within the Flying Start programme and between Flying Start and other services. Your plans should clearly evidence what arrangements are in place locally to ensure this is the case.

Further information can be found at:

wales.gov.uk/topics/improvingservices/sharingpip/?lang=eng

2.6.6 Governance

Good governance and sound financial and performance management control are essential.

Within your Flying Start plan you should provide details of your governance arrangements; identifying joint governance arrangements with, or links to, other programmes, the lead person and partnership arrangements responsible for the overall direction and management of the Flying Start programme.

We will expect you to have an appropriately resourced Flying Start operational team, with the skills and expertise to manage your Flying Start programme efficiently and effectively. Succession and disaster planning should ensure that you can cope robustly with changes in the resources available, including unforeseen disruption.

Further guidance on specific expectations in relation to governance arrangements will be set out in an Annex to this guidance.

2.6.7 Performance and Monitoring

Revised performance and monitoring data collection spreadsheets are being developed at the time of producing this guidance. A separate annex and finance spreadsheet will be produced and local authorities will be expected to adhere to this once provided.

2.6.8 Evaluation

The Welsh Government is committed to research and evaluation activity as a means of ensuring that programmes are having the desired impact. Flying Start is subject to an ongoing programme of evaluation activity at a national level and findings will be shared with our partners, as appropriate, to capture learning and disseminate good practice to support the continued development of the programme.

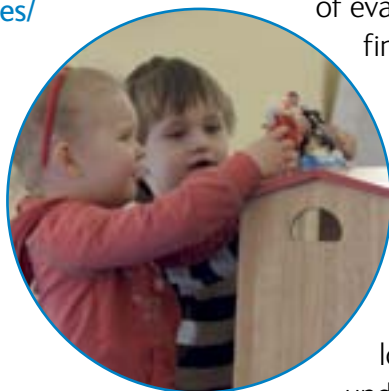
Local authorities will be required to inform the Welsh Government of any local evaluation activity they wish to undertake and to formally request approval from Welsh Government prior to commissioning. Welsh Government will require details of the aims, desired outputs and costs for each piece of work. This will maximize the potential to join-up, minimise the potential for duplication, and help ensure that activity across Wales is commissioned as efficiently and effectively as possible.

2.6.9 Safeguarding

All staff working in Flying Start must be trained and working together in the context of the Children Act 2004 and are bound by its provisions. Your plan will need to evidence that this is the case.

Further information can be found at:

wales.gov.uk/topics/childrenyoungpeople/publications/safeguardingunder2004act/?lang=en



Section 3:

Forward Look/Future Guidance

This guidance document will be added to within the coming months to provide more detailed guidance through annexes in relation to key elements of this programme.

Annexes will include:

- Quality Childcare;
- Parenting;
- Early Language Development;
- Health Visiting & Midwifery;
- Multiagency Working;
- Transition;
- Governance;
- Safeguarding; and
- Performance and Monitoring

In providing guidance on Flying Start, we are seeking to strike a balance between prescribed elements that **must** be contained within your proposals and local discretion and flexibility to meet locally-identified needs. You should use this and the forthcoming Annexes to ensure that your funded activity is, and continues to be, in line with the key aims and expectations of the programme and that it continues to take account of emerging learning and good practice.

This is a living document and remains subject to change.

