

New areas to pilot Welsh Government's free childcare offer

When rolled out across Wales, the offer will provide 30 hours of early education and childcare to working parents of 3 and 4 year olds for 48 weeks of the year.

In September this year, the Welsh Government began piloting the offer in Anglesey, Gwynedd, Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Flintshire, Rhondda Cynon Taff and Swansea. The offer is available in specific areas of these local authorities, and across the whole of Blaenau Gwent, enabling the government to test a range of aspects and issues impacting delivery and take-up.

As part of the Welsh Government's Draft Budget 2018/19, the funding to support the childcare offer increases to £25m in 2018-19, and to £45m in 2019-20. This increase in funding will allow the Welsh Government to expand and test aspects of the delivery of the offer in some additional local authorities from September 2018 onwards.

Learning from the pilot local authority areas is important in helping to fine-tune policies and systems to make sure the offer works for parents and providers alike and preparing local authorities prior to a wider roll-out.

[In addition, earlier today, the Minister set out the Welsh Government's plans to develop and grow the childcare sector to help deliver the childcare offer.](#)

Announcing the expansion, Huw Irranca-Davies said:

"In September 2017, we began delivery of our groundbreaking and ambitious Childcare Offer in seven early implementer local authorities across Wales, ready for full roll-out across Wales by the end of this Assembly term.

"I'm really pleased with the strong interest the offer has received from parents so far. Parents are already telling us it's making a difference to their lives, reducing the strain on family income and helping ensure childcare is not a barrier to them taking up employment or increasing their hours.

"I'm delighted to announce that I've given the go-ahead for the pilots to be expanded into new areas across Wales."

The Minister added:

"I am very grateful to the early implementer local authorities for their hard work to date. They have worked with us to develop and deliver the policy, including the eligibility criteria for parents,

the application process, and the payment methods for childcare providers.

“I would also like to thank the childcare sector for their support including the positive way they have worked with us to ensure there is a good awareness of the childcare offer and the feedback on their experience so far of delivering the offer. The second phase of our successful #TalkChildcare campaign is about engaging further with childcare providers, through online questionnaires, focus groups and direct consultation.

“I look forward to continued joint working as we expand and deliver this offer to parents and children across Wales.”

The Welsh Government has confirmed the offer is now being expanded to include the following areas:

From December 2017

- **Flintshire:** Wards of Connah’s Quay South, Connah’s Quay, Wepre, Flint Castle, Flint Coleshill, Flint Oakenholt, Flint Trelawny, Holywell East, Holywell West, Saltney Mold;
- **Gwynedd:** The well-being area of Caernarfon. Includes following wards; Bethel, Bontnewydd, Cadnant, Clwt y Bont, Cwm y Glo, Deiniolen, Groeslon, Llanberis, Llandwrog, Llanllyfni , Llanrug, Llanwnda, Menai (Caernarfon), Peblig (Caernarfon), Penisa’r waun, Pen-y-groes, Seiont , Talysarn, Waunfawr, Clynnog.

From January 2018

- **Anglesey:** Valley 2, Trearddur 1 and 2, Llanfihangel Esceifiog, Brynteg, Llanbedrgoch, Pentraeth, Amlwch rural, Bodorgan, Llanfair yn Neubwll 1 and 2, Aberffraw and Rhosneigr 1, Parc ar Mynydd, Llanelian, Moelfre, Llanfaethlu, Mechell;
- **Gwynedd:** Well-being area of Penllyn, which includes Bala, Llandderfel, and Llanuwchllyn;
- **Caerphilly:** Wellbeing Area of Caerphilly Basin wards: Aber Valley; Bedwas; Trethomas; Machen; Llanbradach; Morgan Jones; Penyrheol; St James; and St Martins; Lower Islwyn, wards: Abercarn; Crosskeys; Risca East; Risca West; and Ynysddu;
- **Rhondda Cynon Taf:** Wards of Ynyshir and Pontyclun;
- **Flintshire:** Wards of Hope, Caergwrle and Higher Kinnerton;
- **Swansea:** The wards of Gowerton; Penllergaer; Llansamlet; Penderry; Kingsbridge; Upper Loughor; Lower Loughor; Penyrheol; and Cockett (Subject to any call-in of the Cabinet decision)

Currently the offer is being piloted in:

- **Anglesey** is testing in Menai Bridge, Llandegfan, Llanfairpwll, Beaumaris and Llangoed; the villages of Niwbwrch, Dwyran, Brynsiencyn, Llangaffo,

Llanddaniel and Llanedwen; and the town of Llangefni and Talwrn.

- **Gwynedd** is testing in the well-being area of Bangor which includes Bethesda; the well-being area of Porthmadog which also includes Criccieth, Penrhyndeudraeth, Harlech and Garndolbenmaen; the well-being area of Ffestiniog which includes areas down to Trawsfynydd; and the well-being area of Dolgellau which includes the area around Barmouth, Corris, Dinas Mawddwy, Dyffryn Ardudwy and Llanbedr. From January 2018, the well-being area of Caernarfon which includes Bethel, Cwm y Glo, Bontnewydd, Deiniolen, Llanberis, Groeslon, Llanllyfni, Clynog, Llanrug, Llanwnda, Penisarwaen, Penygroes, Talysarn and Waunfawr will also be testing the offer.
- **Blaenau Gwent** will implement the offer across the whole local authority
- **Caerphilly** is testing the offer in the Mid-Valleys East region which incorporates urban areas such as Blackwood, Newbridge and Crumlin as well as a number of smaller communities.
- **Flintshire** is testing the offer in Buckley, Bagillt and Broughton, and within areas of Aston, Connahs Quay (Central and Golftyn), Garden City, Greenfield, Higher Shotton, Holywell (Central), Mancot, Queensferry and Sandycroft.
- **Rhondda Cynon Taf** is currently testing the offer in four school catchment areas spread across the three valleys and one Welsh-medium catchment area to ensure an even spread across the authority. These are Ysgol Gyfun Rhydywaun, Bryncelynnog, Ferndale and Mountain Ash school catchments.
- **Swansea** is testing the offer in wards spread across the city including Dunvant, Penclawdd, Llangyfelach, West Cross, Morriston, Pontarddulais and Gorseinon.

[WCVA to deliver £1.5m Landfill Disposals Tax Communities Scheme](#)

The scheme will go live in April 2018 and will support environmental and community projects in areas affected by the disposal of waste to landfill. £1.5m per annum will be allocated to the grant scheme for 4 years from 2018-19. The scheme will fund environmental and community projects which support biodiversity, waste minimisation and wider environmental enhancements in areas located 5 miles around a landfill site or waste transfer station.

Finance Secretary Mark Drakeford said:

“The Landfill Disposals Tax Communities Scheme recognises there can be a negative impact for communities through the disposal of waste to landfill and will fund projects which aim to offset these impacts.

“This is why the Welsh Government placed the new Landfill Disposals Tax Communities Scheme on the face of the bill. I’m pleased to announce that the contract to deliver the Landfill Disposals Tax Communities Scheme has been awarded to Wales Council for Voluntary Action.

“The WCVA will distribute the funding directly to projects helping to improve the environment for those who live near a landfill site.”

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£500,000 for Welsh Language Education Resources

The resources will support the teaching and learning of Welsh as a subject in its own right and other subjects studied through the medium of Welsh for 3 to 19 year olds and will help to address the current shortage of resources identified by teachers.

The projects are funded as part of an annual budget for the commissioning of Welsh language resources. This funding will be supplemented by another £500,000 in 2018/19 as part of the budget agreement between Plaid Cymru and Labour.

Seven suppliers from across Wales have been commissioned to develop the new resources for the National Curriculum and qualifications for Wales for Art and Design, Music, Welsh; Geography; Drama; Design and Technology; History; Government and Politics; Mathematics; and Modern Foreign Languages.

Announcing the funding, the Cabinet Secretary for Education said:

“We want to ensure that all our pupils, regardless of the language in which they study, have equal access to relevant, engaging and modern educational resources. These projects will ensure the gaps in Welsh provision that have been identified by teachers are filled and that learners are not disadvantaged by their choice to have their education through the medium of Welsh.”

The Minister for Welsh Language and Lifelong Learning added:

“Education is vital to achieving our target of a million Welsh speakers by 2050. Children and young people who attend Welsh medium schools are the Welsh speakers of tomorrow. It is therefore vital they have the necessary resources to ensure they have the best education and that the resources available to them are in the language in which they use, day in day out.”

Licensing scheme for Mobile Animal Exhibitions in Wales

The Welsh Government will engage with stakeholders and enforcement agencies

to develop the licensing scheme.

Earlier this year, the Welsh Government consulted on the introduction of a licensing or registration scheme for Mobile Animal Exhibits (MAEs) in Wales. The majority of those who responded favoured licensing over registration.

The consultation also asked for views on banning the use of wild animals in circuses. The majority of the almost 1,000 responses only answered this question. There was strong support for a ban and, whilst a licensing scheme would include circuses, the Cabinet Secretary has asked officials to consider this as a separate work stream and develop options to address this issue.

Cabinet Secretary Lesley Griffiths said:

“Earlier this week I made clear our position on animal sentience. Animals are sentient beings and should be protected from pain, injury, fear and distress at all stages of their life. Animal welfare is a priority for us as a government and it is clear to me from the responses we received to our consultation, that it is also a priority for the people of Wales.

“There is concern the welfare needs of some animals kept by MAEs, including circuses, cannot be met in a travelling environment. MAEs are diverse and there is no standard licensing regime or requirement for routine inspection.

“We received a great response to our consultation, with most favouring a licensing regime over registration. I have now asked my officials to begin work on developing a licensing scheme for MAEs in Wales.

“This will not be done in isolation. We will need to engage with stakeholders and enforcement agencies in its development, particularly on how we define MAEs, as well as working collaboratively with our counterparts in the other Devolved Administrations to ensure there are no cross border issues.

“By adopting this approach, we will deliver a scheme which will have a lasting impact on welfare standards to achieve our goal of promoting and improving animal health and welfare standards in Wales.”

“It was clear from the consultation responses that there was support for banning the use of wild animals in circuses. My officials will now consider how we address this issue.”