

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

16TH FEBRUARY 2017

WELSH GOVERNMENT 30 HOUR EDUCATION/CHILDCARE OFFER FOR 3 AND 4 YEAR OLDS

REPORT OF THE TEMPORARY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING IN DISCUSSION WITH THE CABINET MEMBER FOR PROSPERITY, WELLBEING AND COMMUNITIES, COUNCILLOR J ROSSER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING, COUNCILLOR E HANAGAN

Author(s): Denise Humphries, Childcare Officer and Esther Thomas, Temporary Director of Education and Lifelong Learning - 01443 744001

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide Elected Members with information on the proposed Welsh Government offer of 30 hours free education / childcare for eligible 3 and 4 year olds.
- 1.2 In addition the purpose of the report is to seek Cabinets' formal approval.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 2.1 Note the contents of this report;
- 2.2 Agree that the pilot areas are acceptable.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Welsh Government recognises that childcare is one of the biggest challenges facing working families in Wales and developing an enhanced childcare offer is a top priority. Supporting families with quality, flexible and affordable childcare supports economic regeneration, can reduce pressures on family income and help parents to participate in work, thus reducing a family's risk of poverty. It also supports the wellbeing of children through positive and rich childcare experiences.
- 3.2 Welsh Government has committed to provide 30 hours a week of free early education and childcare for working parents of 3 and 4 year olds, for 48 weeks of the year.

- 3.4 To support Welsh Government in implementing this offer, all local authorities were invited to submit an Expression of Interest to become early implementers and advisory partners of the offer. Officers in RCT submitted a draft proposal to Welsh Government in September 2016.
- 3.5 On 8th November 2016, Carl Sargaent, Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children, announced that Rhondda Cynon Taf had been chosen as one of the early implementers for the offer, along with Blaenau Gwent, Flintshire, Swansea and Anglesey/Gwynedd. It is anticipated that the pilots will commence in September 2017, followed by wider roll out across Wales.
- 3.6 Welsh Government recognises that this is a complex offer and as such, requires several pilot areas in order to test different aspects of the offer. They took a number of factors into consideration when assessing the EOI's. These included testing how the offer fits with the Foundation Phase. They also looked for a range of different geographical and social areas with local authorities from different regions of Wales and a mix of urban, rural, valley and city environments, and the capacity of the local authority to deliver the offer.
- 3.7 In RCT, we offer pre-nursery Foundation Phase education through a mix of maintained and non-maintained settings, and have a mix of environments and areas of differing economic prosperity. We also have a good range of CSSIW registered childcare provision. We are therefore well placed to test these factors.

4 DRAFT RCT PROPOSAL

- 4.1 A copy of the Expression of Interest (EOI) submitted to Welsh Government in September 2016 is attached, along with an updated proposal.
- 4.2 Officers were keen to choose pilot areas within RCT that would test different elements of the offer and our capacity to deliver it to all eligible families. For example, officers looked at areas that would test:
- Communities First areas versus non Communities First areas and if this will make a difference to the eligibility for the offer and take up by families
 - Level of single parent families versus families with two working parents – will this offer help support parents into work
 - Areas that will test the travel to work (TTW) routes and whether parents will choose childcare provision close to home or close to work
 - Areas with high levels of economic activity/employment versus areas of low economic activity/employment
 - What effect the offer will have on families with little disposable income
 - Areas where there is a high level of current childcare provision versus areas with little current childcare provision
- 4.3 Officers consider that RCT is well placed to be an early implementer of this offer. There is a good range of regulated childcare already available in RCT, including some childcare settings who are also registered with Estyn to deliver nursery education.

- 4.4 RCT currently funds 15 hours of Foundation Phase nursery education for children the term following their third birthday, and full time nursery education for children the term following their fourth birthday. This is above the Welsh Government recommended offer of ten hours per week and will be instrumental in the delivery of this pilot offer.
- 4.5 There is a close working relationship between officers in Education and Lifelong Learning (E&LL) and Early Years and Family Support Services (EYFSS), as well as with colleagues in the newly established Community and Prosperity Service. This will aid implementation and ensure that eligible families are identified and supported to utilise the offer.
- 4.6 It is expected that the pilot offer will increase to other areas of RCT as the pilot progresses, although no further details can be given at this stage.

5 PROGRESS TO DATE

- 5.1 Since the announcement was made by Carl Sargeant, RCT officers have met with Welsh Government officials and had several discussions about our EOI and draft proposal. It is clear that Welsh Government considers our original proposal did not offer enough flexibility and parental choice.
- 5.2 RCT officers are now working very closely with Welsh Government to work through the different aspects of the offer, such as:
 - Identifying eligible families
 - Identifying each families' needs and hours of provision required - and how this can be accommodated
 - How payments will be made to childcare providers
 - How children with additional learning needs can be supported to access the offer
 - How to increase childcare provision capacity in areas where it is needed (particularly Welsh medium)
 - How the childcare element will link into the Foundation Phase nursery education that schools and REP's offer
- 5.3 If Cabinet approve the proposal and pilot areas, a final signed proposal will be resubmitted to Welsh Government for endorsement by Carl Sargeant. Formal approval is needed by the Cabinet Secretary before officers can meet with schools and childcare providers to move the planned implementation forward.
- 5.4 A working group has been established with Welsh Government and LA early implementer representatives. This group is meeting every month in Aberystwyth to discuss and finalise how the pilot schemes will be implemented and conducted.
- 5.5 As well as working in partnership with other early implementers, officers will liaise with neighbouring local authorities to discuss progress and issues that have arisen, so that they can benefit from lessons learned when the final scheme is rolled out across Wales.

6 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 An equality impact assessment is not required at this stage.

7 CONSULTATION

7.1 Not at this time. Ongoing consultation will take place with schools, childcare providers and parents as the pilot progresses. This will help to evaluate the impact of the offer on levels of employment and to identify where there are gaps in the childcare market.

8 FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

8.1 Welsh Government has confirmed that this pilot will be fully funded and that RCT will not be required to use existing council budgets to contribute towards the cost of implementing the offer. The grant letter is due to be issued imminently and is likely to include funding for staffing costs, including admin and IT support.

8.2 A lead officer has been identified with Education and Lifelong Learning who will be the main contact for council colleagues and Welsh Government representatives. Contact details are listed below.

9 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

9.1 There are no legal implications aligned to this report.

10 LINKS TO THE COUNCILS CORPORATE PLAN

10.1 Providing enhanced childcare facilities has a clear link to the Council's priority of building a strong economy.

11 CONCLUSION

11.1 Rhondda Cynon Taf is well placed to be an early implementer of this offer. There is a good range of regulated childcare already available. The school clusters chosen to be part of the pilot proposal have been chosen to test the offer as they each have different strengths and challenges.

11.2 This offer will support working parents, particularly those on low incomes or with low disposable incomes to continue to stay in work and to extend their working hours if required. It will also help to support and encourage non-working parents into employment, thereby supporting the anti-poverty programmes currently available in RCT.

11.3 It is encouraging to note that Welsh Government officials are engaging with local authority officials from the outset to work together to shape the 30 hour childcare/education offer.

11.4 A further briefing paper will be distributed to Cabinet in April 2017 to update on progress.

Other Information:-

Background Papers

Rhondda Cynon Taf Expression of Interest (EOI)

Draft proposal to be submitted to Welsh Government for final approval

Welsh Government Core Script on 30 hour offer in Wales

Welsh Government Childcare Offer: Early Implementers Group, Terms of Reference

Childcare Offer Wales – What needs to be tested

Contact Officer

Denise Humphries, Education and Lifelong Learning

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Email: denise.humphries@rctcbc.gov.uk

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

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Item: **WELSH GOVERNMENT 30 HOUR EDUCATION/CHILDCARE OFFER FOR 3 AND 4 YEAR OLDS**

Background Papers

The background papers included as appendices to this report are:

- Rhondda Cynon Taf Expression of Interest (EOI)
- Draft proposal to be submitted to Welsh Government for final approval
- Welsh Government Core Script on 30 hour offer in Wales
- Welsh Government Childcare Offer: Early Implementers Group, Terms of Reference
- Childcare Offer Wales – What needs to be tested

Officer to contact: Denise Humphries, Education and Lifelong Learning, Tel: 01443 744026

Annex 1 – Background for local authorities/regions to work with the Welsh Government to develop the childcare offer

Whilst we will keep all local authorities informed and hope to work with them in some capacity, we want to work closely and be advised regularly by a core cross section of different types of local authorities, or/and regional consortia of authorities, to make sure the offer works on the ground, for parents and providers. They will be involved in discussions around the eligibility criteria and systems for establishing individual eligibility. They will also be the funded early implementers of the offer with the aim of:

- Testing how
 - accessible and easy it is for parents to access the offer;
 - accessible and easy it is for providers to provide the offer;
 - the offer fits alongside the Early Years Foundation Phase;
- Identifying issues that may surface for parents, local authorities and settings as a result of providing or trying to provide the offer;
- Considering how those issues can be addressed through low-cost / no-cost solutions; and
- Understanding how the offer can best work to enable parents to have increased employment choices;
- Gaining a better understanding of the impact of the offer on parents, local authorities, childcare providers and the childcare sector as a whole.

If your local authority is interested in being on the core advisory group and becoming an early implementer, then please complete the template attached:

Early Implementers of the Childcare Offer Expression of Interest

LA/Regional Consortia: Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council

LA/Regional lead contact - name & role: Esther Thomas

Contact telephone number: 01443 744001

Contact email address: esther.k.thomas@rhondda-cynon-taff.gov.uk

Section 1 – Why is your LA/regional consortia a good choice for being an early implementer?

RCT is well placed to be an early implementer of this offer. There is a good range of regulated childcare already available. A number of these settings are also Registered Education Providers (REP's), providing nursery education, via both English and Welsh medium. They have ongoing support from the Early Years Advisory Teacher and other officers within the Council. Schools in RCT are funded to offer part time (50%) of nursery education. However, a large number currently offer full time nursery education using existing budgets and resources (for the 2016/17 academic year - 50 out of 100 schools).

There is a close working relationship between Education and Lifelong Learning (E&LL) and Early Years and Family Support Services (EYFSS), which will help in the implementation of this offer.

One of the Council's priorities is to build a stronger economy and this offer will assist in ensuring the greatest impact is made in improving outcomes for children and families through the closer alignment of service areas. The Council has already taken significant steps forward to integrate its approach to tackling poverty to release resources, reduce duplication of effort and maximise impact. To support this shift towards a more strategic approach to developing and delivering provision a single RCT wide Generating Wealth Board has been established to provide the oversight required for RCT's approach to tackling poverty.

There are already well established cross border education arrangements with neighbouring local authorities. In particular, Merthyr Tydfil and Caerphilly, who have schools that feed into YG Rhydywaun and Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School, and Bridgend, where a number of RCT pupils attend Pencoed Comprehensive School. The school improvement service is also co-ordinated through the Central South Consortium Joint Education Service (CSCJES).

	<p>For the purposes of this pilot, RCT has contacted Merthyr Tydfil CBC to discuss possible collaborative cross border working, using YG Rhydywaun as the pilot cluster. However, at this stage, they are not able to develop this further. If this position changes in the future, we will welcome further discussion.</p>
<p>Section 2 – provide evidence of how well you know about and understand the demand for, accessibility to and availability of childcare in your area?</p>	<p>For the purposes of this pilot, a mapping exercise has been undertaken for each school cluster area to identify the number of eligible children, the number of schools, if there are any REP's in the clusters and what other types of childcare provision are currently available. From this, pilot school clusters have been identified to test the delivery and impact of the offer (please see attached pilot project proposal).</p> <p>As part of the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA), a ward analysis was undertaken in 2015. This evaluated the childcare provision available, the number of childcare enquiries to the Family Information Service (FIS), the population of 0-14 year olds, the percentage of economic activity amongst 16-64 year olds, the provision of nursery education (whether through schools or REP's) and whether there had been changes to the housing stock and employment situation in each of the 52 wards in RCT. This analysis also identified wards where more exploration and development of childcare needs was required. This work ensures that RCT is well placed to have a detailed knowledge of childcare supply available to meet this offer, and where there may be gaps in provision.</p>
<p>Section 3 – provide evidence of your direct links to parents, providers and other relevant stakeholders. How could you engage them in the development and implementation of the offer?</p>	<p>The Family Information Service is well resourced within RCT. FIS Outreach Workers attend many parent groups, JCP lone parent advice sessions and childcare settings. They, along with a FIS Database Officer who updates the website profile, ensure that parents have access to up to date information and advice.</p> <p>There are well established links between the Flying Start (FS) team and officers in E&LL responsible for the REP's. Both FS and REP settings have good networks available to offer them support and guidance. Umbrella organisations work closely with officers in RCT and sit on several advisory boards, including that for the REP's.</p> <p>Improvements have been made in the way that officers consult with parents as part of the CSA. This has included increased use of online questionnaires and social media. For the next CSA consultation, due this Autumn, officers will work with a variety of community and parent focus groups to further improve the opportunity for parents to tell us about their childcare needs. This work will also be useful in gauging the views of parents on this offer if RCT is to be one of the early implementers.</p>

	<p>Specific ideas to engage parents for this pilot offer include information meetings in the pilot school clusters, increased information via the FIS networks, press releases and social media updates, as well as linking into established focus groups.</p> <p>The Council has a full time Children’s Participation Officer. The Communities First, Families First and Flying Start programmes now sit under one Community and Prosperity Service, with the aim of providing a single point of co-ordination to tackle the causes and consequences of poverty across the area. Each programme would have its own area of knowledge and expertise which would support the development and implementation of the new childcare offer.</p> <p>There are established local Communities First engagement forums which engage with parents who are currently working or looking to enter employment which will also support the development of this pilot.</p>
<p>Section 4 – What elements of the childcare offer would you be particularly interested in advising on and testing?</p>	<p>We would be interested in advising and testing all areas of the offer, but in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The take up of the offer in holiday periods – would current childcare provision cater for all of a family’s needs (older/younger sibling childcare needs etc)? • The flexibility of childcare providers to extend provision (a significant number of childcare providers are term time only, i.e. 38 weeks – will they have the ability to extend to 48 weeks per year?) • The ability of childcare providers to accommodate the increased numbers of children during holiday periods – implications for staffing • The impact of the offer on childcare providers and the ability to support the sustainability of current providers • The take up of the offer in school clusters where the demographics differ • The ability to deliver the offer in Welsh medium schools, as they traditionally offer only one intake per academic year, rather than three intakes per year • The ability of the Council to support the administration of the scheme • Will the offer of additional childcare/education actually increase employment – is 30 hours sufficient? • Will it result in increased employment opportunities for education and childcare staff – are there enough suitably qualified staff or will there be a need for additional training?
<p>Section 5 – How would you monitor and evaluate if the childcare offer was</p>	<p>We have a range of systems already in place to assist us in monitoring and evaluating this offer. Existing management information systems will be utilised to monitor eligibility and participation. This will link into the current School Admissions</p>

working on the ground, and identify issues as they arise?

process to reduce duplication and additional administration. Amendments to current information systems will also be made in order to monitor progress and any increases in employment rates.

Guidelines will be established for schools and childcare providers. These will include information on eligibility, processes to follow and reporting requirements (attendance, take up of offer, difficulties encountered etc).

An approved provider framework will be established to ensure that childcare providers who participate in the scheme adhere to agreed requirements. Monitoring visits will be undertaken to ensure equity of quality and to offer support and advice to childcare settings. This process, and general administrative systems, will be similar in nature to those already used by the Flying Start and REP teams.

A risk log will be established at implementation stage. Regular monitoring of financing procedures and budgets will also take place, as will regular reporting to Elected Members, the Generating Wealth Board and Senior Officers from E&LL and EYFSS.

Signed by Chief Executive/s:

Date:

RCT updated proposal to Welsh Government for 30 hour childcare/education offer

All children in Wales are eligible to receive a minimum of 10 hours nursery education from the term following their third birthday, within either a maintained or non maintained setting.

RCT currently funds part time (15 hours) nursery education, either in a school or Registered Education Provider (REP) setting, from the term following their third birthday. Full time (30 hours) nursery education is offered from the term following their fourth birthday.

The Welsh Government (WG) education/childcare offer proposes to provide eligible parents with 30 hours of education/childcare per week for 48 weeks of the year. Welsh Minister have yet to make final decisions on the eligibility for the offer, however, for the purposes of early implementation both parents (or parent if a lone parent family) are required to work 16 hours or above per week at national minimum wage or national living wage. An upper annual household income threshold is yet to be decided. During the early implementation, eligible children will receive the offer from the term following their third birthday to the September following their fourth birthday.

Our initial proposal was submitted to WG in September 2016 with a predominantly education based offer for 38 weeks of the year, and 10 weeks of purely childcare provision. Since then, discussions with WG have indicated that this will not allow the level of parental choice and flexibility that WG are keen to adopt. Therefore, our revised offer proposes to deliver a mix of education and childcare as follows:

- Children will receive a nursery education place the term following their 3rd birthday in a maintained school setting, or non-maintained REP (if no school place is available in the catchment or other local school)
- This will be for 15 hours per week, unless the individual school is able to offer a full time (30 hours) placement. If a school offers 30 hours of education, eligible children will receive their term time offer via an education placement
- All REP's offer 15 hours of nursery education. For REP's, and where schools offer 15 hours of nursery education, the remaining 15 hours per week in term time will be offered through a CSSIW registered childcare setting
- This will be for 38 weeks per annum (academic year)
- The additional 10 weeks of 30 hours per week entitlement will be offered through a CSSIW registered childcare setting
- Payments will be made directly to the childcare provider on submission of an invoice at intervals to be determined

Using current childcare providers will help sustain the childcare market in RCT, ensure parental choice and not disadvantage faith or Welsh medium choice. Term time childcare providers will be offered support to extend their opening hours in order to deliver the holiday period entitlement. Demand for the childcare element of the offer will be monitored in order to identify where additional childcare provision may need to be developed.

In order to ensure flexibility for parents, the additional 10 weeks of 30 hours per week childcare may be offered as hours (i.e. 300 hours) if parents require more childcare provision during term

time and less during holiday periods. Parents will be required to sign a contract stipulating their exact requirements so that officers can monitor the number of hours used and so that childcare providers can plan their staffing levels. It will be difficult to accommodate parental requirements that change on a weekly basis. However, where parents work a regular shift pattern this can be taken into account.

Attendance will be monitored at regular intervals to ensure eligible children are receiving their entitlement.

As part of our expression of interest, officers agreed to identify the pilot areas in terms of school clusters. One pilot school cluster area was identified in each of the Rhondda, Cynon and Taf areas of RCT, as well as a Welsh medium cluster.

The pilot areas were chosen in order to test different aspects of the offer, and each has different strengths and challenges. In particular, officers are keen to test the following:

- The impact of the offer on encouraging and supporting parents into employment in areas of low economic activity
- The impact of the offer on the Travel to Work (TTW) routes – will parents choose childcare provision near their homes or en route to their places of work?
- The impact of the offer on current childcare provision – will demand outstrip supply?
- Can this offer be managed when working in partnership with neighbouring local authorities?
- How can we support eligible children with additional learning and physical needs to access the offer
- What impact will the offer have on Welsh medium childcare provision – can the market cope with the likely increased demand or will this be an opportunity to develop more Welsh medium provision?
- How will this offer link with the nursery education offer in schools, particularly those that offer full time nursery education
- How will this offer link into other poverty and employment programmes currently available, such as Communities First, Flying Start, Communities4work)

Rhondda area

The Ferndale cluster has been chosen as the Rhondda pilot. In this cluster, we are looking to test the impact of the offer on encouraging and supporting parents into employment.

The rationale for choosing the Ferndale cluster includes:

- There are currently four associated primary schools in this cluster, all of whom are offering full time nursery education in the 2016/17 academic year. A fifth school is due to join this cluster in September 2018 and, for the purposes of this pilot, has been included. This school is offering part time nursery education in 2016/17
- The Ferndale school cluster has the lowest average percentage of economic activity in the Rhondda area. This will test the impact of the offer on encouraging and supporting parents into employment
- There are 5 learner support classes within this cluster. This will test the capacity to enable children with additional learning and physical needs to access the offer
- Although several areas in this cluster are part of the Communities First and Flying Start programmes, Ferndale town centre itself is not in either programme. This will therefore test the impact of the offer, depending on whether eligible children live within C1st and FS areas or not
- Currently, there is not a large selection of childcare provision available, therefore this will test if it encourages new childcare development

- There are a range of other services available in this cluster (i.e. Communities First, Communities4work, Jobcentre Plus etc) and as such, will be a good test to see if we can work with these services to identify eligible parents and to assess the impact of the offer on supporting parents into employment

Cynon area

The Mountain Ash cluster has been chosen as the Cynon pilot. In this cluster, we are looking to test the impact of childcare demand on the TTW routes – will parents choose childcare provision near their homes or on their way to their places of work.

The rationale for choosing the Mountain Ash cluster includes:

- There are nine associated schools in this cluster. Only four are planning to offer full time nursery education in the 2016/17 academic year, with the other five offering part time nursery education. This will therefore test the education based element of this offer
- There is a similar percentage of average economic activity in this cluster as in the Aberdare cluster. This cluster was chosen over the Aberdare cluster as it will test the TTW routes
- There are a range of other services available in this cluster (i.e. Communities First, Communities4work, Jobcentre Plus etc) and as such, will be a good test to see if we can work with these services to determine if the childcare offer will support parents into employment
- There is a good mix of existing childcare within the immediate or TTW areas

Taff area

The Bryncelynnog cluster has been chosen as the Taf pilot. In this cluster, we are looking to test if the current childcare supply has enough capacity to cope with the predicted demand.

The rationale for choosing the Bryncelynnog cluster includes:

- There are seven associated schools in this cluster. Only one is offering full time nursery education in the 2016/17 academic year, with the rest offering part time nursery education
- There are 5 learner support classes within this cluster. This will test the capacity to enable children with additional learning and physical needs to access the offer
- There is a range of childcare available in this cluster. This includes seven REP's that can deliver the education and childcare elements. There is also some childcare available 'wrapped' around the part time nursery education offer
- Along with the Y Pant cluster, Bryncelynnog has the highest average percentage of economic activity. This will test the level of demand for the offer
- This cluster will test the capacity of the childcare market to accommodate the increased childcare demands, and will be a good indicator of the take up rate of parents

Welsh Medium

The Ysgol Gyfun Rhydywaun cluster has been chosen as a Welsh medium pilot. This will allow us to test our capacity to deliver the Welsh medium offer. It will also test cross border collaboration, should Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council wish to explore this in the future:

- There are three RCT associated schools in this cluster, and two associated schools from Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council. The three RCT schools are offering full time nursery education in the 2016/17 academic year, but with only one September intake.
- Due to the one intake policy favoured by the RCT schools in this cluster, there is a high saturation/usage of Welsh medium Registered Education Providers for two terms per annum.
- This will test our capacity to deliver the education offer to children who become eligible in the Spring and Summer terms, as well as testing if there is enough Welsh medium CSSIW registered childcare provision

The table below outlines the current situation in each of the English medium and Welsh medium clusters in RCT:

Cluster	No' of Schools in cluster	No' of schools offering full time nursery <i>(in 2016/17 academic year)</i>	No' of schools offering part time nursery <i>(in 2016/17 academic year)</i>	No' of schools with Learner Support Classes	No' of Registered Education Providers	No' of Flying Start settings	Average economic activity <i>(based on 2011 Census data; RCT average 63.2%)</i>
RHONDDA							
Ferndale	5 (inc Pontygwaith)	4	1	5	0	3	63.27%
Porth	8	0	7	3	0	3	68.28%
Tonypandy	10 (inc Bodringallt, Gelli & Williamstown)	5	4	2	0	3	69.20%
Treorchy	8 (inc Bodringallt & Gelli)	5	2	1	0	2	69.13%
CYNON							
Aberdare	14	10	14	6	0	2	68.29%
Mountain Ash	9	4	5	4	0	4	68.45%
TAFF							
Bryncelynnog	7	1	6	5	7	2	78.08%
Hawthorn	7 (inc Maesycloed)	1	6	2	2	2	70.53%
Pontypridd	7 (inc Maesycloed)	5	2	2	0	2	74.10%
Tonyrefail	5 (inc Williamstown)	2	3	2	0	2	68.98%
Y Pant	6	2	4	0	2	1	78.26%
WELSH MEDIUM							
YG Cymer	5	4	1	0	6	2	67.75%
YG Garth Olwg	5	2	3	0	4	2	75.47%
Ysgol Llanhari	3	1	2	0	2	1	75.48%
YG Rhydywaun	3	3	0	0	2	1 (bilingual setting. Also included in M. Ash figures)	68.34%

Twelve of the 24 schools in the pilot clusters have learner support classes, currently offering support to 163 children with additional learning and physical needs. As part of the pilot, work will be undertaken to align the ALN policies for FS and REP settings more closely with schools to ensure equity of support. We will also work with childcare providers to ensure that training and adaptation requirements are assessed and supported.

In preparation for the start of the pilot, further consideration will be given to the implications on provision/eligibility of support for children with additional learning and physical needs, school

capacity and staffing, free school meals, transport considerations and childcare provider capacity and staffing.

Eligible children

We are currently working with Welsh Government to agree the number of children who will be part of the initial pilot areas and the rate per hour that childcare providers will receive to deliver the offer.

Officers in RCT have been inputting live birth data into our School Admissions computer system. This has allowed us to calculate how many children live in the pilot postcodes. We have used an assumption of 80% of the children in these areas will access English medium education and 20% will access Welsh medium.

Using these figures alongside the average percentage of economic activity in each of the wards in the pilot clusters, we have been able to estimate the likely number of eligible children:

LIVE BIRTH DATA	Eligible from Autumn 17 term	Eligible from Spring 18 term	Eligible from Summer 18 term	Average economic activity % for the wards in the cluster	Approximate total eligible children Sept 17 - July 18
Born between	Sept 13 - Aug 14	Sept 14 - Dec 14	Jan 15 - Mar 15		
Rhydywaun live births x 20%	140	47	34	68.34%	151
Ferndale live births x 80%	110	28	22	63.27%	101
Mountain Ash live births x 80%	180	62	35	68.45%	190
Bryncelynnog live births x 80%	250	75	55	78.08%	297
Total number of eligible children for 1 st year of pilot					739

The number of eligible children that participate in the offer will depend on the level of take up by parents and will increase if the offer is successful in encouraging parents into employment.

It will also increase as the offer is rolled out to other areas of RCT later in the pilot.

Signed by Chief Executive/s: _____

Date: _____

To: Chief Executive Rhondda
Cynon Taf County Borough
Council

From: Jo-Anne Daniels
Director – Communities and Tackling Poverty
Llywodraeth Cymru / Welsh Government
Parc Cathays 2, Caerdydd / Cathays Park 2,
Cardiff
CF10 3NQ
Ffôn / Tel: 0300 0628078

cc:

10 November 2016

Dear Chief Executive,

You recently submitted an expression of interest for your local authority to become early implementers of the childcare offer in Wales. I am very grateful for the time and effort that you put into developing your expression of interest. It is clear that you understand the important role that government-funded childcare will play in supporting working families.

We received 13 expressions from 16 local authorities, all of which contained detailed proposals for testing different aspects of the childcare offer. Each expression was assessed in terms of their alignment with the purpose of the childcare offer, their innovation in overcoming potential barriers to delivery and their understanding and knowledge of their local childcare sector. We also looked to achieve a balance between rural and urban communities and achieving a good geographical spread across Wales to fully test the offer.

The Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children and the First Minister are pleased to invite you to become one of the 5 early implementer areas who will deliver and test the offer across 6 local authorities from September 2017. The Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children made an Oral Statement in Plenary earlier today and a copy of this statement is attached for information.

We will contact you shortly to arrange an initial meeting and begin more detailed planning for delivery. I am keen to develop the offer with you and to use the coming months to discuss a range of issues, including supporting parental choice, flexibility of the offer and capacity of the sector, as well as innovative delivery and systems.

I see this very much as a partnership between the Welsh Government, local authorities and the sector. Further, I would like to build upon the close working arrangements that you have established with neighbouring local authorities so they can learn from your experiences in becoming an early implementer local authority. I would like to factor that action learning into the delivery plan that we will agree together.

In the mean time if you have any questions please contact:
Elin Gwynedd on 03000625553 or Jason Cooper on 03000256072, or
e-mail - ChildcareandPlayCorrespondenceMailbox@wales.gsi.gov.uk.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jo-Anne Daniels', written in a cursive style.

Jo-Anne Daniels

Director – Communities and Tackling Poverty

**STATEMENT
BY
THE WELSH GOVERNMENT**

TITLE *The Childcare Offer*

DATE *8 November 2016*

BY *Carl Sargeant, Cabinet Secretary for Communities and
Children*

Thank you Presiding Officer

The last few years have been very difficult for working families. Many have struggled to make ends meet and manage the consequences of the austerity imposed by the UK Government..

And one of the concerns working parents have raised with us time and again is the cost of childcare, and the impact that has on them, their finances and their quality of life.

Since early summer we have been talking to parents. In September I launched our Talk Childcare campaign, and we have received feedback from over 1,500 parents so far. We've also held focus groups and this engagement will continue through till the spring.

From the engagement to date, it is clear parents want childcare to be:

- less of a drain on family income, so that they can make their budgets work;
- available at times and in places which make it easier for them to work; and
- more accessible, closer to home and work, with support for their children's' needs.

This Government is committed to supporting working families across Wales.

And as a direct response to the issues and concerns families have raised with us, we will provide 30 hours of free early education and childcare to the working parents of three and four year olds across Wales for 48 weeks of the year. The most generous childcare offer for working parents in the UK.

This will reduce the strain on family income and help ensure childcare is not a barrier to parents getting a job or continuing to work.

I want to provide Assembly Members today with further details of our plan for delivering the new childcare offer.

Our new childcare offer will include our successful Foundation Phase provision during term times, with supporting childcare.

During the weeks of the year when the Foundation Phase is not

provided, qualifying children will receive 30 hours of childcare, supporting working families with the costs of holiday care.

Helping parents meet the costs of childcare is only part of the picture. We also need to address availability and accessibility, and in particular look at the support needed to help children with Additional Learning Needs take up their entitlement under this offer.

We will work with childcare providers to ensure as much flexibility as possible in delivering this offer.

To ensure this is possible, we are looking at the capacity the sector has to deliver this offer.

We know there are parts of Wales where there is already a shortage of childcare and we will work with the sector to help it grow and thrive.

I have recently commissioned research in partnership with the Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure, looking in detail at the childcare sector, the support it needs and the costs involved in providing quality care.

We are also looking at the outcome of the recent review of the sector by Qualifications Wales. Good childcare requires a strong, skilled and effective workforce and we want to ensure we have a clear career path and training plan in place.

To that end, we will be launching a 10 Year Plan for the Workforce next year which will set out our priorities for the sector in the short, medium and long term.

Accessible childcare also means looking at childcare choices.

Our plan is to work with the sector to ensure that there is enough provision for parents who want to access Welsh medium care and to make it a more attractive option for those who have not previously considered it. This is important in the

context of our commitment to one million Welsh speakers by 2050.

It is also important to ensure there is sufficient provision for children requiring additional support to learn and develop helping them to develop and thrive.

But in all this, we must not lose sight of the children themselves, and the balance between education, care, play and time with their families.

We will need to work this through with parents, providers and other stakeholders to get this balance right.

But I'm also keen to get on with work on the ground. So, I am pleased to be able to tell Members today that we will begin testing the offer within six local authorities from September 2017.

Testing the offer will allow us to make sure we:

- align the hours of childcare with the hours of Early Years Foundation Phase in a way that works for parents and children;
- have the right number of childcare places in the right parts of Wales;
- develop and expand the workforce, with improved training;
- support the sector to grow, providing the flexibility parents need;
- learn what works and what doesn't, building on experience and evidence to deliver for all working parents in Wales.

Joining us on this journey from September 2017 will be

Anglesey and Gwynedd, Flintshire, Blaenau Gwent, Rhondda

Cynon Taf, and Swansea. This gives us a mix of geographical areas across Wales in which to test the offer.

I also want to thank those authorities who expressed their interest in working with us, but are not included at this time. I want to expand the reach of early adopters in the future and will bring more of you in as we go along.

Delivering this commitment will be challenging and I don't underestimate what needs to be done.

We need to put the right infrastructure in place and doing that will take time. We will work with parents and providers to ensure the system supports our children as well as helping working parents.

The barriers childcare can present to parents, stopping them supporting their families as they wish, must be addressed head-on

It makes no sense for parents to be earning less than their childcare costs.

It makes no sense to have to turn down a promotion, or a better job, losing opportunities to improve your family's circumstances, just because you can't access childcare when and where you need it.

We want parents to have employment *choices*.

Working with key partners, and listening to our citizens, will allow us to deliver real change.

(1008 words)

Check against delivery

Embargoed until after Carl Sargeant, Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children has delivered the statement.

Childcare Offer:

Early Implementers Group - Terms of Reference

December 2016

Purpose

Purpose of the Early Implementer Group is to bring together those local authorities that will be implementing the government-funded childcare offer (the offer) from September 2017 and the Welsh Government in order to:

- Develop, implement and support the arrangements for the early implementation of the offer from September 2017;
- Ensure the early implementation of the offer allows appropriate testing of options to balance maximum choice and flexibility to parents, with interest from providers, and value for money for the tax payer;
- Ensure the early implementation of the offer supports other relevant policies and programmes;
- Enable the collection and consideration of key data sets in relation to the early implementation of the offer to inform its longer term development and roll out;
- Oversee the transfer of learning and ‘lessons learnt’ between the members of the group and the other 16 local authorities in Wales.

The Group is a key part of the governance and assurance arrangements for the early implementation of the offer, spanning both its planning, development and roll out within the specified areas of each local authority.

Background

The Welsh Government is committed to providing 30 hours of government-funded childcare for 3 and 4 year old children of working parents for 48 weeks of the year. During term time (38 weeks of the year) the government-funded childcare offer will consist of at least 10 hours of Early Years Foundation Phase education and up to 20 hours of childcare (the exact split may depend upon local circumstances). Outside school term time the offer will consist of 30 hours of childcare.

The Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children announced on 8 November 2016 that the government-funded childcare offer would be tested in selected area of six local authorities from September 2017. The six local authorities are: Ynys Môn; Gwynedd; Flintshire; Swansea, Rhondda Cynon Taf and Blaenau Gwent.

There is an expectation that the testing local authorities will make arrangements to deliver the government-funded childcare offer to all the eligible parents in the agreed areas. They will work with the Welsh Government to make arrangements to evaluate the effectiveness of the delivery of the offer and its impact on families and childcare providers.

Membership

Membership of the group will comprise of two representatives from each of the early implementing local authorities and members of the childcare offer team from the Welsh Government. Other stakeholders with an interest in the childcare offer, such as: the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW); school improvement consortia; and representative bodies from schools and childcare providers, may be invited on an ad hoc basis as the offer is developed and their input is required by the group.

Role and Responsibilities of the Group Members

Welsh Government

- To ensure that the six early implementing local authorities fully understand the aims, objectives and the scope of the offer;
- To provide guidance and support to the six early implementing local authorities in developing their delivery arrangements;
- To provide funding for the early implementation of the offer;
- To support and facilitate learning from the development and delivery of the offer in the early implementing local authorities;
- To provide information and assurances on the early implementation of the offer to the Programme Board, and the Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children;
- To provide progress reports on the early implementation of the offer to the Stakeholder Reference Group¹ and the offer Advisory Group²;

¹ *The Stakeholder reference Group is a group comprising of: umbrella organisations that represent childcare providers in Wales; CSSIW; Estyn; Care Council for Wales; the Children's Commissioner for Wales; the Future Generations' Commissioner for Wales; the Welsh Government. Its role is to: provide external scrutiny, challenge and advice to the Welsh Government on the development of the offer; to communicate key messages to the sector; and gather and feedback stakeholders' views to the Welsh Government.*

² *The Advisory Group is a group consisting of Local Authorities who are not delivering the Childcare Offer in year 1. It's role is to learn from the Early Implementation, advise the Welsh Government on issues, barriers, suggestions and solutions to prepare for further roll out going forward.*

The role of the Welsh Government in relation to the early implementation of the offer will be informed by the work required to develop and roll out the childcare offer across the whole of Wales. This work will be informed by the testing undertaken by early implementing local authorities, with the offer in place across Wales towards the end of this Assembly. This will include coordinating national communications, exploring innovative childcare models to support flexible and affordable childcare and addressing relevant policy barriers.

Local Authorities

- To make arrangements to secure the provision of government-funded childcare for all eligible parents according to the criteria set out in Welsh Government guidance;
- To ensure that the development and delivery of the offer complies with their local authority's corporate governance and accountability arrangements and any guidance published by the Welsh Government;
- Produce a delivery plan for the delivery of the offer within their local authority by the agreed date and following Welsh Government guidance;
- To manage and mitigate against project risks at a local level;
- To work with eligible parents, childcare providers and relevant stakeholders, to overcome any local barriers to take-up of the offer and to consider innovative and new models of delivery which could facilitate this;
- To provide relevant information to eligible parents and co-ordinate and provide targeted communications to any relevant persons;
- To make arrangements for delivering the offer in a way that offers maximum flexibility and choice for parents, and provides value for money for the tax payer;
- To ensure that the delivery of the offer supports any other relevant policies or programmes within the local authority. If it becomes apparent to any local authority that the delivery of the offer may compromise their local authority, or any of its partners, in the delivery of their objectives then they should bring this to the attention of the representatives of the Welsh Government at the earliest opportunity;
- To collect and share (dependent on data sharing responsibilities) any data required for evaluative purposes as requested by the Welsh Government and help to facilitate data collections by Welsh Government or third parties working on their behalf within the Local Authority. The Welsh Government will agree any data requirements with local authorities before September 2017;

Frequency of Meetings

Meetings of the full group will be held monthly until September 2017 when these terms of reference will be reviewed. The Welsh Government also require monthly development meetings with the individual local authorities.

All group members may request ad hoc meetings with the Welsh Government outside the full group as they see fit. This may include inviting representatives of the Welsh Government to meetings within their local authority or with their stakeholders. In addition, early implementing local authorities may want to meet with each other or their or other local authorities as they see fit.

Local authorities will be required to report on their plans for delivery, and the delivery of the offer itself, through the following three routes.

a) Delivery Plan

Local authorities will be required to produce a delivery plan that will detail their plans for early implementation of the offer within the specified areas. The Welsh Government will provide guidance on what the delivery plan should contain but it will require sections on:

- the detail of the offer and the areas within your local authority where the offer will be available during the early implementation phase (specified in terms of electoral wards; Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs); school catchment areas etc (these areas will be agreed in advance with the Welsh Government);
- The numbers of children (broken down into age groups and type of childcare setting where available to share that the local authority expects to access the offer each month for the period September 2017 to September 2018 through English Language provision;
- The numbers of children (broken down into age gender and type of childcare setting) that the local authority expects to access the offer each month for the period September 2017 to September 2018 through Welsh language provision;
- An implementation plan with a timetable that will specify the communications that the local authority will undertake with parents and childcare providers in relation to the early implementation of the offer, how the local authority expect parents to register for the early implementation of the offer; the eligibility checking process the local authority will follow; the process by which schools/ childcare providers will be paid;
- An analysis of any barriers to take-up of the offer and actions to mitigate these;
- Any additional actions the local authority may take to help parents of disabled children or of children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) access the offer;

- Any additional actions the local authority may take to stimulate Welsh-medium childcare;
- Any actions the local authority may take to engage with schools and governors to explore the relationship with the Early Years Foundation Phase and childcare on school sites.

b) Financial Reporting

From September 2017, when the offer is available local authorities will be required to submit financial reports for each month, profiling the numbers of children in receipt of the offer, the cost of delivering the offer and any other expenses accrued during the month. This may be in addition to any claims/ invoices you may need to submit to the Welsh Government.

C) Evaluation Reporting

The Welsh Government expects to be able to fully evaluate the offer. Consequently there will be a requirement on local authorities to provide data on various aspects of the delivery of the offer and the wider population. Local authorities may also be required to work with any independent researchers commissioned to carry out independent assessments by the Welsh Government.

Secretariat

The Welsh Government will provide secretariat to the group including arranging meetings circulating minutes and action points and making all papers and other resources available to group members in a timely fashion.

Annexes

Annex 1	Welsh Government Officials – Roles and Contact Details
Annex 2	Local Authority Lead Officers and Contact Details

Childcare Offer Wales – What needs to be tested?

<p>Process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Test the capacity of the sector • Test how accessible and easy it is for parents to access the offer ; • Test how accessible and easy it is for providers to provide the offer; • Test the administration process including any technical delivery systems • Test the childcare eligibility checking system, and interactions with other benefits <p>Additional:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Test how best to Positively promote the 30 hours childcare offer • Test how we can maximise parental take-up and employment • 	<p>Delivery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding how the offer can best work to enable parents to have increased employment choices; • provider flexibility can be maximised to fit parental working patterns, including wrap around; • Identifying issues that may surface for parents, local authorities and settings as a result of providing or trying to provide the offer; • Considering how issues can be addressed through low-cost / no-cost solutions; • Test take up rates and ensure that delivering government-funded childcare is an attractive proposition for parents and providers • Test the capacity for SEN provision • Test the capacity for Welsh Language provision <p>Additional</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Test different approaches that drive innovation and efficiency, working with umbrella bodies to trial different ways of supporting providers to achieve economies of scale and reduce costs; •
<p>Alignment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Test alignment with the early years Foundation Phase (EYFP) • Test if the offer is considered as a transition from Flying Start; 	<p>Impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gaining a better understanding of the impact of the offer on parents, local authorities, childcare providers and the childcare sector as a whole. • Test how the childcare sector will cope and adapt to accommodate the offer; • Test the economic Impact • Test the impact on take-up of the EYFP