



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

STATISTICS

Flying Start: April 2019 to March 2020

The report provides a statistical overview of how the programme is working for April 2019 to March 2020.

First published: 25 February 2021

Last updated: 25 February 2021

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Flying Start is the Welsh Government Early Years programme aimed at improving outcomes for families with children under 4 years of age in some of the most disadvantaged areas of Wales.

The purpose of this statistical release is to provide evidence for policy development; to allow local authorities to monitor and benchmark their service provision against other local authorities in Wales; and to inform for the public

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about provision of the Flying Start programme.

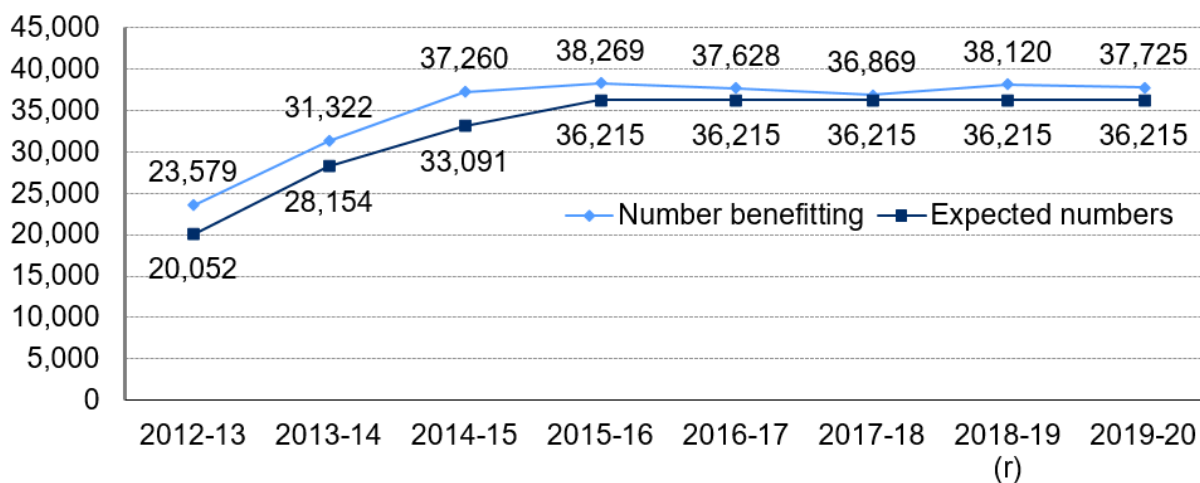
The main source of data used in this statistical release is management information collected via the Welsh Government Flying Start Data Monitoring Return directly from local authorities. This data collection started in 2012-13.

Supplementary data is sourced from the National Community Child Health Database, the Pupil Level Annual School Census, the Child Measurement Programme, and the Coverage of Vaccination Evaluation Rapidly (COVER) report.

While the majority of the financial year was unaffected by the COVID-19 pandemic, there were significant changes to the way Flying Start services were offered in March 2020 which need to be considered when using this year's data. More details are provided in the [quality and methodology information section](#).

Children receiving Flying Start services

Chart 1: Number of children in Wales in receipt of Flying start services, 2012-13 to 2019-20



Source: Welsh Government Flying Start Data Monitoring Returns

(r) Figure has been revised since previously published, following a resubmission of data from Torfaen.

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The number of children expected to receive Flying Start services in 2019-20 was 36,215. Chart 1 shows that during 2019-20, 37,725 children were in receipt of Flying Start services across Wales (Table 1). This was above the expected number but a 1% decrease on the number of children in receipt of services in 2018-19, when 38,120 (revised since last published) received Flying Start services.

The number and percentage of children on Flying Start health visitor caseloads varies by local authority area. Table 1 shows that 38% of children aged under 4 in Merthyr Tydfil were on Flying Start health visitor caseloads (the highest in Wales), compared to 16% in Monmouthshire (the lowest in Wales).

Note that the total number of children in receipt of flying start services will be affected by the number of children aged under 4 years in the general population, which has fallen in nearly all local authorities in recent years.

Also note that children may move in or out of Flying Start areas during the year and therefore the total number of children in receipt of flying start services does not equal the number of children who receive Flying Start services for the duration of a whole year.

Table 1: Selected Flying Start programme indicators by local authority, population and caseload, 2018-19 and 2019-20 (MS Excel)

Flying Start health visiting service

Flying Start children up to age 4 on the health visitor caseload were seen an average of 4.5 times during 2019-20 by health visitors and a further 1.4 times by members of the wider health team, a slight decrease since 2018-19 (Table 2).

In 2019-20, this varied by local authority from 3.3 health visitor visits per child in Swansea and Denbighshire to 5.8 in Bridgend, and 0.3 wider health team visits per child in Rhondda Cynon Taf to 3.9 in Neath Port Talbot.

Flying Start health visitor caseloads are capped at 110 children whereas health

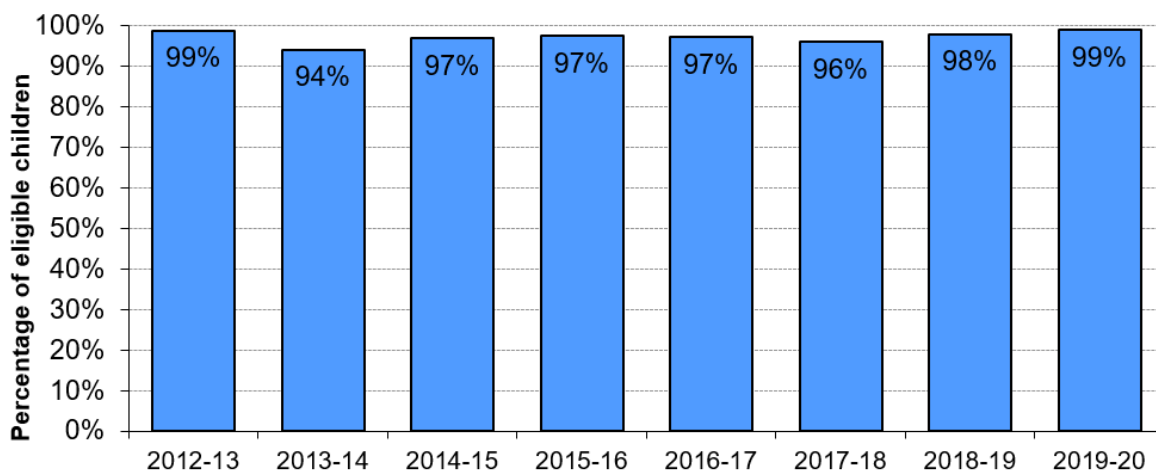
visitors working outside Flying Start may have up to 350 children on their caseloads.

Table 2: Selected Flying Start programme indicators by local authority, face to face contacts, 2018-19 and 2019-20 (MS Excel)

Childcare

The core Flying Start childcare offer is that quality childcare is offered to parents of all eligible 2 to 3 year olds for 2½ hours a day, 5 days a week for 39 weeks of the year. In addition, there should be at least 15 sessions of provision for the family during the school holidays. A family can choose to take-up either the full offer or a reduced offer, if only some of the sessions are needed.

Chart 2: Number of full or reduced offers of Flying Start-provided childcare made as a percentage of newly eligible children, Wales, 2012-13 to 2019-20



Source: Welsh Government Flying Start Data Monitoring Returns

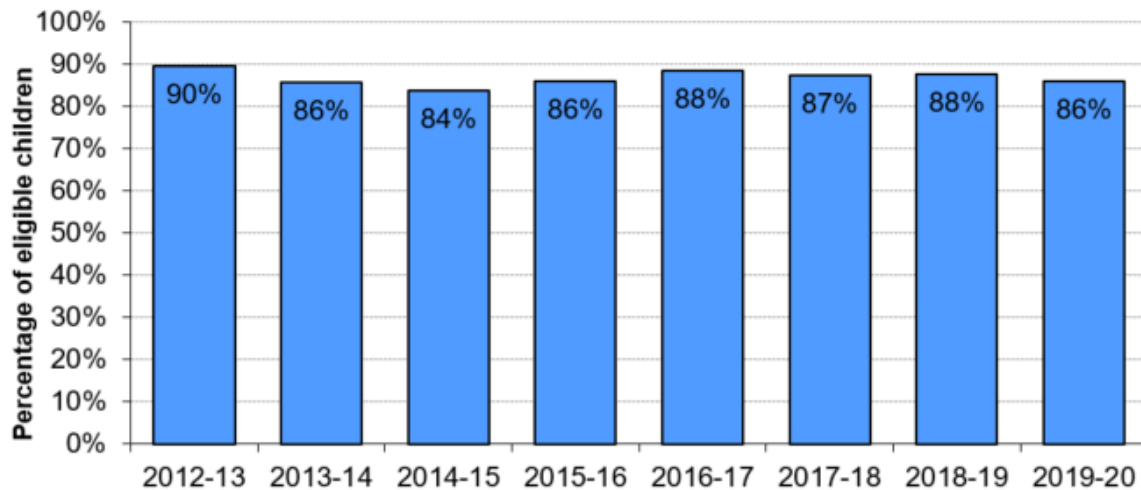
The percentage of eligible children offered Flying Start-provided childcare has increased slightly in the last 3 years and was 99% in 2019-20.

Childcare offers were made to more than 95% of eligible children in 21 local authorities. This varied between local authorities with 16 local authorities offering

all eligible children childcare, while 94% of eligible children were offered childcare in Wrexham (the lowest in Wales).

While childcare offers are made by local authorities, it is the parents/guardians' choice whether to accept the offer.

Chart 3: Percentage of children taking up Flying Start-provided childcare, Wales, 2012-13 to 2019-20 (a)



Source: Welsh Government Flying Start Data Monitoring Returns

(a) 'Take-up' refers to whether the offer of childcare is accepted regardless of whether or not the child subsequently attends childcare.

The percentage of children taking up Flying Start-provided childcare has remained fairly steady in the last 3 years, slightly below the high of 90% in the first year of the programme.

In 2019-20, this varied by local authority from 100% of children taking up Flying Start-provided childcare in Conwy and Monmouthshire (the highest rates in Wales) to 52% in Denbighshire (the lowest rate in Wales).

Table 3: Selected Flying Start programme indicators by local authority and childcare, 2018-19 and 2019-20 (MS Excel)

Parenting and speech, language and

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communication

Every family with a Flying Start child must be offered formal parenting support at least on an annual basis. In addition to the formal parenting offer, other parenting support may be delivered. This may include informal parenting support, bespoke enhanced one-to-one sessions and informal drop-in sessions, depending on need. Formal and informal structured courses are defined as those with a structured curriculum and a set start and end date.

In 2019-20 the take-up of courses offered to Flying Start Children was 70% for formal structured parenting courses and 60% for informal structured parenting/ speech, language and communication (SLC) courses.

Table 4: Parenting courses offered by local authority, 2019-20 (MS Excel)

Births in Flying Start areas

In 2019, 24% of live births in Wales were to mothers who are resident in Flying Start areas, a slight decrease since 2018.

In 2019, the percentage of live births to mothers resident in Flying Start areas ranged between 42% in Merthyr Tydfil (highest in Wales) and 15% in Monmouthshire (lowest in Wales). In general, this reflects the coverage of the programme in each local authority.

Table 5: Live births to Welsh residents in Flying Start and non-Flying Start areas, 2018 and 2019 (MS Excel)

Health outcomes: infant feeding

Breastfeeding is recognised as being of crucial importance for the health of babies and their mothers. The percentage of babies breastfed at 10 days of age

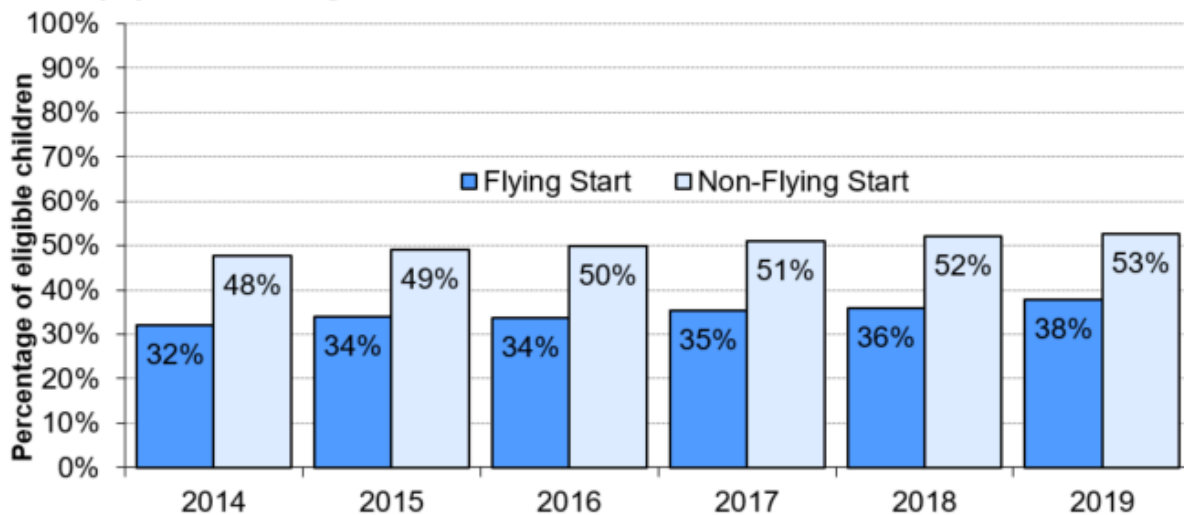
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is one of the maternity indicators used to benchmark local health board maternity services.

Chart 4: Percentage (a) of babies born to mothers living in Flying Start and non-Flying Start areas, receiving any breast milk (b) at 10 days old, Wales, 2014 to 2019



Source: National Community Child Health Database (NCCHD)

(a) The percentages are of the total live births minus births with no stated breastfeeding status: 14% had no stated breastfeeding status at 10 days in 2014, 4% in 2015 and 2016, 9% in 2017, 8% in 2018 and 13% in 2019.

(b) 'Any breast milk' consists of combined milk feeding (breast milk plus artificial milk) plus those who receive exclusively breast milk (nothing else except water).

In 2019, over a third (38%) of babies born to mothers living in Flying Start areas were fed any breast milk at 10 days old, compared to over half (53%) of those in non-Flying Start areas.

The percentage of babies born to mothers living in Flying Start areas who received any breast milk has increased slightly over the last 3 years, as has the proportion of babies born to mothers living in non-Flying Start areas.

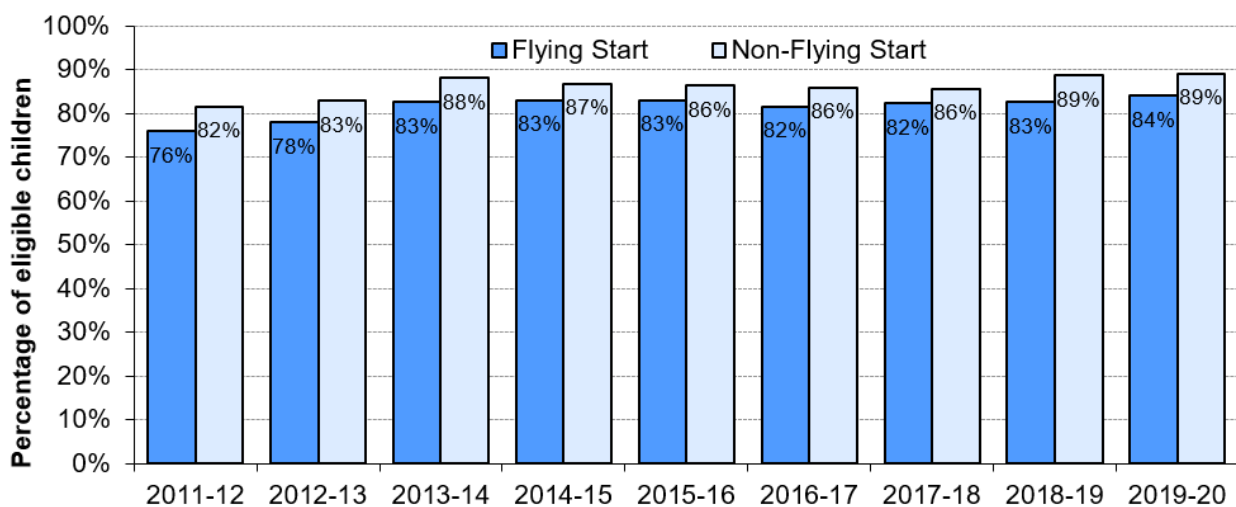
The percentage of mothers living in Flying Start areas breastfeeding at 10 days varied at local authority level from 59% in Ceredigion (highest in Wales) to 25% in Merthyr Tydfil (lowest in Wales).

Table 6: Number and percentage of babies born to mothers living in Flying Start and non Flying Start areas who received any breast milk at 10 days old by local authority, 2019 (MS Excel)

Health outcomes: uptake of routine childhood immunisation

Vaccines are offered to all children, as part of the routine childhood immunisation schedule, to protect them against Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis, Polio, Haemophilus influenzae (Hib), Measles, Mumps, Rubella, Meningitis C and Pneumococcal infection (PCV). Vaccinations are given according to a routine childhood immunisation schedule starting 8 weeks after birth, and the aim is for all children to be fully immunised by their fourth birthday.

Chart 5: Percentage of children in Flying Start and non-Flying Start areas that are fully immunised at 4th birthday, Wales, 2011-12 to 2019-20



Source: Public Health Wales COVER report; National Community Child Health Database (NCCHD) (denominator)

In 2019-20, 84% of children living in Flying Start areas were fully immunised at age 4 compared to 89% of children living in non-Flying Start areas.

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The percentage of children living in Flying Start areas who were fully immunised at age 4 varied at local authority level from 96% in Anglesey (highest in Wales) to 77% in Bridgend (lowest in Wales).

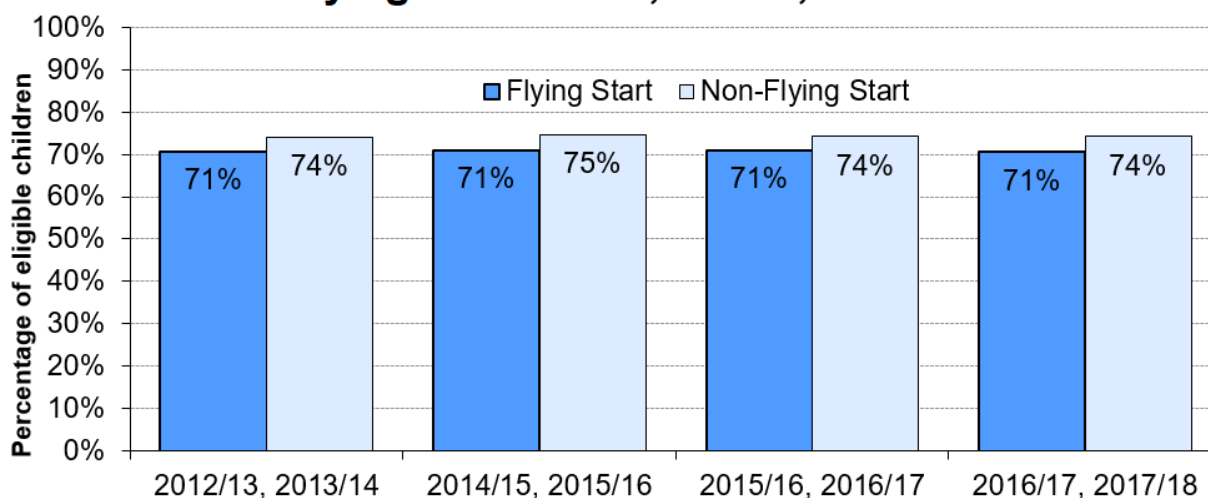
In most local authorities (19 out of 22) the uptake rates were higher for children living in non-Flying Start areas than in Flying Start areas.

Table 7: Number and percentage of children living in Flying Start and non Flying Start areas who are fully immunised by their 4th birthday by local authority, 2018-19 and 2019-20 (MS Excel)

Health outcomes: healthy weight

The **Child Measurement Programme for Wales** is a surveillance programme set up in 2011 when the Welsh Government asked Public Health Wales to undertake a national height and weight measuring programme for Wales, to give a better understanding about how children in Wales are growing. The programme standardises the way in which primary school children (aged 4 and 5) are measured across Wales.

Chart 6: Prevalence of children in ‘healthy weight’ (a) categories for children aged 4-5 years resident within Flying Start and non-Flying Start areas, Wales, 2012/13 to 2017/18 (b)



Source: Child Measurement Programme (CMP) for Wales 2012/13 to 2017/18 produced by Public Health Wales Observatory, using CMP data (NWIS).

(a) ‘Healthy weight’ includes healthy weight or underweight.

(b) Two academic years’ data are combined to increase the sample size.

Data from the Child Measurement Programme shows that the percentage of children living in Flying Start areas who have a healthy weight has been consistently lower than children living in non-Flying Start areas since data was first collected.

The latest data available is for 2016/17 and 2017/2018 academic years combined. 2018/19 data could not be processed or analysed as a result of organisational changes within Public Health Wales due to the Covid-19 pandemic, during which the Child Measurement Programme team were redeployed to work on the COVID response.

The latest data shows 71% of children aged 4-5 living in Flying Start areas had a healthy weight compared to 74% in non-Flying Start areas.

The data shows that there is little difference between the percentage of boys and girls with healthy weights in both Flying Start areas and non-Flying Start areas.

Table 8: Prevalence of children in ‘healthy weight’ categories for children aged 4 and 5 years resident within Flying Start and non-Flying Start areas, 2016/17 and 2017/18 combined (MS Excel)

Education: children recorded on roll at a maintained school

The numbers of Flying Start children starting Foundation Phase (the statutory curriculum for all 3-7 year olds in Wales in both maintained and non-maintained schools) measures the degree to which Flying Start children are taking up early years education opportunities.

In 2019-20, 91% of children at age 3 living in Flying Start programme areas were recorded on maintained school rolls compared to 85% of children at age 3 living in non-Flying Start areas.

The percentage of children living in Flying Start areas on maintained school rolls has remained fairly steady throughout the duration of the programme, varying between 91% and 94%.

Table 9: Number and percentage of children aged 3, living in Flying Start and non Flying Start areas and recorded on roll at a maintained school in PLASC in January 2019 and in January 2020 (age as at previous 31 August) (MS Excel)

Quality and methodology information

A full [quality report](#) is published alongside this statistical release.

While the majority of 2019-20 was unaffected by the COVID-19 pandemic, the first national lockdown came in March 2020, so services offered and data collected for that month were affected in various ways, including:

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- some parenting and SLC programmes were not able to be completed
- attendance for childcare sessions as some parents chose not to take-up childcare they may have accepted prior to the pandemic, and later in the month, the enforced lockdown
- some health visitors were redeployed to different roles to help with the pandemic
- some Flying Start staff would have been self-isolating which affected the service offered
- some contacts recorded as face-to-face contacts may have taken place over the phone or virtually
- no home visits or clinics were allowed from the week commencing 16 March 2020
- general ICT issues in local authorities were not resolved during the early stages of the pandemic as resources were under increased pressure

These factors need to be considered when using data for 2019-20.

Well-being of Future Generations Act (WFG)

The Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Wales. The Act puts in place seven wellbeing goals for Wales. These are for a more equal, prosperous, resilient, healthier and globally responsible Wales, with cohesive communities and a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language. Under section (10)(1) of the Act, the Welsh Ministers must (a) publish indicators (“national indicators”) that must be applied for the purpose of measuring progress towards the achievement of the Well-being goals, and (b) lay a copy of the national indicators before Senedd Cymru. The 46 national indicators were laid in March 2016.

Information on the indicators, along with narratives for each of the wellbeing goals and associated technical information is available in the [Well-being of Wales report](#).

Further information on the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#).

The statistics included in this release could also provide supporting narrative to the national indicators and be used by public services boards in relation to their local wellbeing assessments and local wellbeing plans.

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SFR: 56/2021

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